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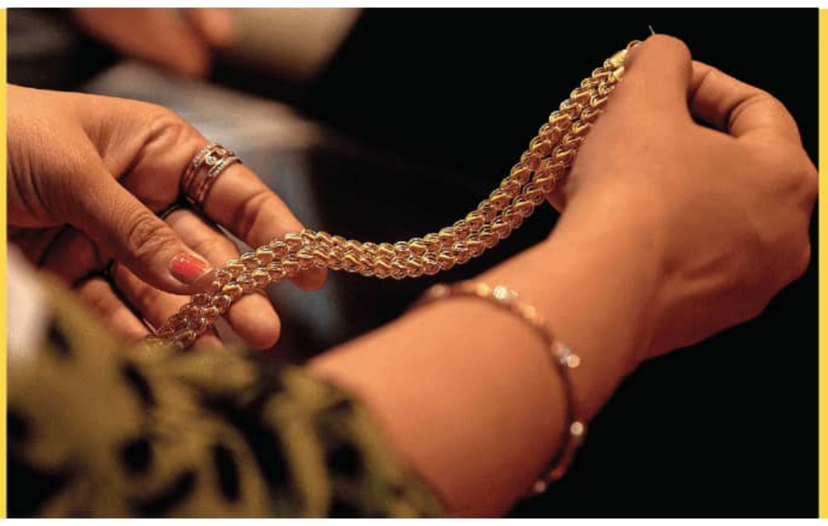
Bangalore Mirror ON SUNDAY

TEMP Max 28 | Min 16 | Humidity 42% Partly sunny Sensex 82,269 | Nifty 25,320 | Gold 1,49,075 | Silver 2,91,922 | Dollar 91.68 | Euro 108.70 | GBP 125.51



ALL THAT GLITTERS

Record bullion rally forcing jewellery industry to rethink strategy as unconventional ideas become new normal

PAGE 2

THEY MEME IT

Memes, movies and music — traffic police going all out to convey road safety messages in most creative ways to grab motorists' attention

PAGE 5

From mobs in mood for violence to threatening neighbours or stones and abuses flung by unknown passersby, dog feeders across city report increased hostility ever since Supreme Court's statements of August

DON'T BITE THE HANDS THAT FEED

Citizens groups misinterpreting remarks to harass animal lovers, says expert

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Spontaneous remarks made by the Supreme Court during the hearing of an ongoing stray dog case over the last few weeks have given anti-feeder vigilantes in the city the licence to harass and abuse feeders, animal welfare workers have alleged.

Many dog feeders from different parts of Bengaluru say that while harassment, assaults, and verbal abuse hurled towards them are not new, the severity has reached a new level.

Amrita B Nair has been living in a 125-acre high-rise residential society in North Bengaluru for the past five years, while taking care of more than 120 community dogs and many more in the surrounding area. Nair says the animals have been coexisting peacefully. Every dog is sterilised and vaccinated as per Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, and daily feeding is carried out responsibly.

However, Nair says she was recently harassed in light of the August 22 order by the SC and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 »

"Due to misinformation and misinterpretation of the Supreme Court's recent observations circulating in the media, hostility has risen. Two days ago, I was stopped from feeding, verbally abused, threatened, and more than 10 men ganged up on me

—Amrita B Nair, North Bengaluru resident

Fine trick

As Bengalureans lose lakhs of rupees to traffic challan scams, officials and experts reiterate: Don't click on suspicious links

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Trying to pay a Rs 500 fine for an alleged traffic violation, a software professional recently lost ₹2.3 lakh. The techie had become a victim of the fake traffic challan scam, which has spiked over the past few weeks in the city.

Police officials and cybersecurity experts warn that these frauds often initiated through seemingly innocuous messages or links are causing significant financial losses. Officials point out that such scams tend to surge during periods when authorities announce 50% discounts on fines or conduct special enforcement drives, as fraudsters exploit public attention and urgency to trap victims.

Several Bengalureans reported losing large sums of money after receiving fake alerts claiming they had unpaid traffic challans. With special enforcement drives currently under way, fraudsters are exploiting the heightened enforcement as a loophole to make their scams appear genuine.

According to a case of January 26, a person received a message purportedly from 'traffic officials' on their phone about a Rs 500 fine and ended up losing Rs 2.3 lakh. An FIR has been registered at the Whitefield CEN police station.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Expert talk

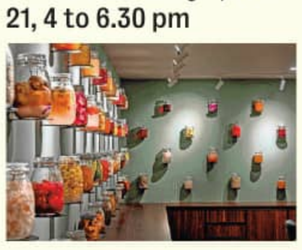
Azim Premji University will host a public lecture by Arniika Kuusisto, Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of Helsinki, on "Education in an Age of Polarisation." The talk will explore how education can foster values, resilience and belonging among children and youth. **Where: Bangalore International Centre, Domlur; When: February 2, 6.30 to 8 pm**

02 Immersive showcase

An invite-only preview of The Sixth Sense Immersive Showcase will blend art, sound and storytelling, offering a first glimpse into India's largest immersive festival. **Where: Alembic City, Whitefield; When: February 12, 5 to 10 pm**

03 Flavour lab

The Good Craft Co.'s Flavour Lab in Whitefield hosts immersive February sessions exploring Indian craft spirits and fermentation. Highlights include The Indian Whisky Story and a World Kombucha Day special with Mossant, featuring guided tastings and behind-the-scenes insights. **Where: TGCC Flavour Lab, Whitefield; When: February 7, 14 & 21, 4 to 6.30 pm**



04 Teen curators

India's first museum exhibition curated by 14–17 year olds, "Voices of Time" at the Indian Music Experience, traces the evolution of sound from gramophones to MP3s. Guided walkthroughs on opening day include storytelling, role play, and audience participation. **Where: The Indian Music Experience Museum, JP Nagar When: February 1 to March 15, 12.30 to 1.15 pm & 4.30 to 5.15 pm**

05 Valentine's celebration

Bhartiya Mall Bengaluru is spreading love with "A Date To Remember". Couples can write heartfelt letters, strike poses at Instagram-worthy photo booths, enjoy live entertainment, and win rewards—including dine-in vouchers and a luxury staycation at The Leela Bhartiya City. **Where: Bhartiya Mall, Thanisandra Main Rd; When: January 30 to February 14**

Govt school bags Wipro honour

Maragondanahalli Government Higher Primary School has won the Wipro Earthian Awards 2025 for its project on water conservation. The award was presented at the 15th edition of the Wipro Earthian Awards, held at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru, where schools and colleges from across the country were recognised for work related to sustainability education. The school's students studied water sources, usage, wastage and conservation in their school, homes and village through surveys, interviews and fieldwork. They assessed water availability, identified areas of wastage, examined rainwater-harvesting potential, tested local water sources and set up a drip irrigation system for the school garden. **— BMB**

Gold, silver prices bite, shoppers reconsider jewellery purchases

Soaring bullion rates thin showroom crowds, trigger sell-offs and force jewellers to rethink tradition

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India's long-standing love affair with gold is facing a moment of reckoning. As gold and silver prices continue their steep climb, jewellery showrooms across the country are witnessing thinning footfalls, anxious buyers and a visible shift in consumer behaviour. What was once a default purchase for weddings, festivals and savings is now being weighed gram by gram, with even a single gram of gold becoming a considered decision for many households. The impact of this rally is no longer limited to investors and traders. It has begun reshaping the entire jewellery ecosystem, from manufacturers and artisans to temple suppliers and small retailers.

Demand Slowdown

Gold and silver prices have surged far beyond market expectations. Gold has already touched Rs 16,000 per gram, while silver is hovering around Rs 400 per gram. Market estimates suggest gold could soon reach Rs 20,000 per gram. There are no immediate signs of a price correction.

Traders said the relentless rise has hit demand hard. Across India, retail gold sales have dropped by 40 to 50 per cent. Jewellery that saw brisk sales during November and December recorded nearly a 50 per cent fall in January. After a historic 60 per cent price rise in 2025, gold prices have already climbed more than 17 per cent in the first month of 2026 alone.

Faced with falling sales, the jewellery industry is now exploring unconventional solutions. One idea gaining traction is the introduction of 14-karat gold jewellery, a category not currently permitted for manufacturing in India. "At present, most jewellery is made using 22-karat gold. While 18-karat jewellery

Runaway gold and silver prices are reshaping buying habits across India, pushing households towards distress sales, digital alternatives and calls for lower-karat jewellery as affordability takes centre stage

is allowed, it is largely restricted to diamond-studded designs. Industry bodies believe lower-karat jewellery could make gold more affordable without completely driving customers away from physical ornaments," said Shankarachari, a gold trader.

Another gold trader, Narayanachari, said, "In many foreign countries, even 9-karat gold jewellery is common. If India allows 14-karat and 9-karat jewellery, customers will get gold ornaments at much lower prices. However, 14-karat jewellery can be introduced only with the Central government's approval. Gold purity is measured in karats, with 24 karat gold being 99.9 to 100 percent pure, followed by 22 karat at 91.6 percent, 18 karat at 70 percent, 14 karat at 50 percent, and 9 karat at 37.5 percent purity."

While new purchases are slowing, another trend is accelerating. Customers are increasingly selling old gold to take advantage of high prices. Across urban centres and smaller towns alike, jewellery shops report a steady rush of people exchanging old ornaments for cash.

The trend is not just evident in Bengaluru but also in tier-two cities such as Kalaburagi, where the impact has been severe. Work for jewellery makers has fallen by nearly 90 per cent due to a lack of new orders. Saraf Bazaar, once buzzing with daily transactions worth several crores of rupees in gold and silver, has seen a sharp dip in activity. Many households are selling old gold to repay small loans or meet everyday expenses, rather than buying new jewellery. Traders said digital alternatives are also gaining ground. Investments in online platforms offering digital gold and bullion-backed products have risen by 15 to 20 per cent, signalling a shift away from traditional physical jewellery. Silver, long seen as gold's affordable cousin, is also rallying. Global production slipped slightly from 25,500 tonnes to 25,000 tonnes in 2024, while demand surged. Jewellery businessman Kiran K notes China's stockpiling and US policy uncertainty are driving investors to silver, warning that further speculation could trigger chaos.

The bullion rally has pushed copper, bronze, brass and lead prices up 50–60% in three years, raising costs of puja and panchaloha items. Temple committees and devotees are delaying purchases, with metal trader Yashwant noting these hikes are hitting sales directly.

Policy Watch

The industry is now focusing on structural solutions, like lower-karat jewellery, as tradition, affordability and policy reshape India's volatile market.

Three arrested in kidnap case

Hebbagodi police have arrested three persons for allegedly abducting a goods vehicle driver and extorting money from him at H Hosahalli village, under the limits of the Hebbagodi Police Station. According to the police, the complainant, a resident of H Hosahalli, was working as a goods vehicle driver and had recently sold his vehicle, with plans to purchase a cab. After learning that he was carrying the sale proceeds, one of his friends, along with two associates, allegedly hatched a plan to abduct him and extort money. The incident took place on January 30 at around 7 pm, when the complainant was allegedly called out of his house by his friend. He was taken in an autorickshaw to a secluded location, where the accused reportedly assaulted him with a hockey stick. The trio allegedly robbed him of ₹1,500 in cash and demanded an additional ₹50,000, threatening to kill him if he failed to comply.

A case was filed at Hebbagodi Police Station, and all three accused were arrested on January 31 near H Hosahalli, with ₹1,500 recovered. They allegedly confessed to robbing. Investigation continues. **— BMB**

Early heat fuels melon rush

Summer appears to have arrived ahead of schedule, with watermelons hitting markets well before the season across towns and cities. While nights remain unusually cold, daytime temperatures are steadily rising, pushing people towards cooling fruits and drinks. Reflecting this shift, watermelons that usually appear only by the end of February have made an early entry in January itself. Temporary fruit stalls have sprung up in busy areas, along highways and at major junctions, with rising demand also seen for cucumbers, tender coconut and cold beverages as people struggle to cope with the sudden heat.

Traders say most of the watermelons sold locally are sourced in bulk from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, as only a few farmers in the district grow the crop in limited quantities. At present, wholesale prices range between ₹20 and ₹22 per kg, while retail rates hover between ₹25 and ₹30, with prices expected to rise further if temperatures climb. Vendors note that changing weather patterns have blurred traditional seasons, bringing summer-like conditions much earlier and boosting demand for watermelon, valued not just for quenching thirst but also for its nutritional benefits and ability to prevent dehydration. **— BMB**

BMRCL to levy penalties on loud passengers

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Nearly seven people, who were standing outside after dinner, had a narrow escape when a speeding car rammed into a road divider and crashed into a eatery on 100 Feet Road in Indiranagar late on Thursday night. The dramatic incident was captured on a nearby CCTV camera.ALooking to pass time during travel, many Namma Metro commuters scroll through social media reels or online content during their journey. However, not everyone uses earphones or Bluetooth-enabled devices, with audio often played aloud. This habit now hit the pocket, as BMRCL has decided to penalise passengers who watch reels or make loud calls inside metro trains.

As part of the initiative, special teams consisting of two Home Guards each were deployed across metro trains to counsel passengers and promote better travel etiquette. An analysis of the year-long drive revealed the scale of the problem. During the same period, 1,907 commuters were found

eating inside trains and 1,677 were caught chewing tobacco products, officials said.

Rising violations

A senior BMRCL official said certain actions, such as playing loud music, eating food or chewing tobacco inside metro trains, cause inconvenience to co-passengers and disturb the shared travel environment. In response to the growing number of violations, BMRCL launched a focused onboard sensitisation drive over the past year to create awareness among commuters.BMRCL has clarified that several of these offences attract penalties under the Metro Railways (Operation and Maintenance) Act, 2002. The corporation said enforcement of fines is aimed at reinforcing existing rules rather than introducing new restrictions. Officials have urged commuters to cooperate by following basic travel etiquette, such as using earphones while listening to music, avoiding the consumption of food inside trains, refraining from tobacco use and offering priority seats when required.A BMRCL official said, "We appeal to passengers to show courtesy, patience and consideration towards fellow commuters. Behavioural changes can go a long way in ensuring that every journey on Namma Metro remains safe, inclusive and comfortable for all sections of society."

CRIME FILES

4 workers found dead in shed, suffocation suspected

Four migrant workers from Assam employed at a private company were found dead under mysterious circumstances inside a labour shed at Muthsandra village in Hoskote taluk on Friday morning, police said.

The deceased were identified as Jayant Sinde (25), Neerendranath (24), Doctor Tide (25), and Dhananjay Tide (20). All four were working at a Coca-Cola warehouse and staying in a temporary shed located close to their workplace.

Police said the workers were sleeping inside the shed when the incident occurred. Preliminary investigations indicate the deaths may have been caused by suffocation. Officers suspect the men cooked food late on Thursday night after shutting all doors and windows, resulting in poor ventilation, oxygen depletion, or inhalation of toxic fumes.

The incident came to light when the workers failed to report for duty on Friday morning. Concerned colleagues checked the shed and alerted the Sulibele police, who found the men unconscious and declared them dead at the spot. The doors and windows were found closed.

"There are indications of suffocation, but other possibilities are also being examined," a senior police officer said. **–BMB**

SIT begins detailed inquiry into CJ Roy case

The Bengaluru City Police on Saturday constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to conduct a comprehensive probe into the death of CJ Roy, Founder and Chairman of the Confident Group and Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic.

Roy was found dead at the Confident Group's corporate office premises on Friday afternoon, following which police initiated an investigation. To ensure a thorough, impartial and focused inquiry, City Police Commissioner Shree Seemanth Kumar Singh, IPS, ordered the formation of the SIT and directed that the investigation be formally transferred to the team. The case has been registered as an Unnatural Death Report at Ashok Nagar Police Station under Section 194(3)(4) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) in connection with the incident that occurred on January 30.

Meanwhile, Roy's post-mortem was conducted at Bowring Hospital on Saturday. Addressing the media, Aravind MN, Medical Superintendent of Bowring Hospital, said samples were collected from the body and sent for forensic examination. He explained that the bullet entered through the left side of the chest and had no exit wound, as it was surgically removed. The projectile damaged vital organs, including the heart, lungs and parts of the abdomen. It was identified as a 6.35 mm bullet that travelled up to the back ribs and remained lodged inside the body. Doctors noted that the lower portion of the lung was affected, with no injuries found on other parts of the body apart from the chest region.

He added that the pistol and trigger were examined and sent for testing to check for gunpowder residue. Blood and finger samples were also collected and, along with other evidence, forwarded to the Forensic Science Laboratory for detailed analysis.

The SIT will function under the overall supervision of Joint Commissioner of Police (West Zone) C Vamshi Krishna, IPS Deputy Commissioner of Police (South Division) Lokesh Jagalasar, IPS, has been appointed chief investigating officer. Other members include DCP (Central) Akshay Hake, ACP Sudhir of Halasur Gate Subdivision, ACP Ramachandra of CCRB, and Inspector Ravi KB of Ashok Nagar Police Station. The SIT has been empowered to induct additional officers as required. **–BMB**

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Footpath near public health centre turns open urinal

Hasty clean-ups after complaints not enough, say citizens after KG Road's stinky footpath poses persistent health concerns

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Left: State of the footpath on Thursday. The commodes have since been cleared up

On Saturday, there was a peremptory clean-up of a black spot on KG Road. The location is a stretch of the footpath on KG Road that has turned into a perennial yellow spot. More than being an eyesore, the area has become a serious health hazard, especially as it is located close to a public health centre. Though authorities concerned have taken measures earlier to clean up the spot, the footpath adjacent to the Bengaluru Zilla Panchayat Primary Health Centre and opposite the Sisters of the Good Shepherd continues to remain unhygienic.

Bangalore Mirror had published a story titled City in a yellow spot bother on November 6, 2024, highlighting how the lack of public toilets and the failure of e-commerce companies to provide basic facilities to their executives have turned footpaths and vacant spaces into open-air urinals.

With a strong stench emanating from the yellow spot, pedestrians are finding it difficult to walk along the footpath. Many are forced to cover their noses with handkerchiefs to shield themselves from the foul smell. The plight of outpatients visiting the primary health centre, managed by the Bengaluru Zilla Panchayat, is particularly distressing. The unhygienic conditions and persistent stench are causing inconvenience not only to doctors and medical staff but also to patients who visit the centre on weekdays.

"We are suffering a lot due to the nuisance caused by irresponsible people who use the footpath to attend nature's call. It has become tough for us to cope with the bad odour," said an employee of the primary health centre.

Echoing similar concerns, Dr Sushma Rajashekar said she had lodged online complaints three times, but no lasting action had been taken by the authorities to keep the place clean. "Around 100 outpatients visit this primary health centre every day. I want the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited authorities to ensure that the footpath is kept clean and neat. Measures must be taken to prevent the footpath from becoming a yellow spot again," she said.

Responding to the issue, BSWML Assistant General Manager Janardhan said he was aware of the yellow spot on KG Road. "We have already taken steps to clean the yellow spot, but it appears the condition has returned to square one. We had deputed marshals for two to three days to keep vigil on those creating the nuisance. I myself find it difficult to stand on the footpath due to the bad odour and unhygienic conditions. I will visit the spot again and take measures to beautify the area," he said.

> **"We are suffering a lot due to the nuisance caused by irresponsible people who use the footpath to attend nature's call. It has become tough for us to cope with the bad odour** – Employee of the Primary Health Centre

NGT cracks whip: Shift temple from buffer zone

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In a recent order, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has instructed the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) to shift a temple constructed in the buffer zone of a stormwater drain in Kadugodi in East Bengaluru. This follows a report by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) a couple of months ago stating that the temple is in the buffer zone of the water body, is unauthorised, and must be removed as per Zoning Regulations. Since the temple falls under the jurisdiction of the GBA, erstwhile BBMP, the corporation has been directed to carry out the removal process.

"We direct the GBA (BBMP) to shift the temple, if the same is found to be an encroachment, in the manner known to law," the southern bench of the green tribunal noted in its order.

The tribunal was hearing a petition alleging encroachment on the buffer zone of a stormwater drain in Belathur Village by Bhoo Sai Charana, a developer engaged in residential layouts, villa plots, and roads in the area. The petition claimed that the project proponent had encroached upon and closed the secondary stormwater drain, besides taking over part of its stream and buffer.

However, NGT observed that, except for the temple, allegations made by the petitioner were not genuine, as they failed to provide supporting evidence. "The reports of official respondents go on to show that, excepting the temple, there are no other encroachments, as alleged, on the buffer zone," the tribunal stated.

> **Following the petition filed in 2023, NGT sent a notice to GBA, which reported that no road was constructed within the buffer zone, 25 meters from the centre of the drain as per the revenue sketch**

BDA, in its report filed with NGT, mentioned that a joint inspection was conducted by representatives from the Deputy Commissioner and Deputy Director of Land Records, Assistant Director of Land Records, Tahsildar, Executive Engineer of BDA, GBA, and BENAPRA. The inspection confirmed that the temple constitutes an encroachment.

Following the petition filed in 2023, NGT sent a notice to GBA, which reported that no road was constructed within the buffer zone, 25 meters from the centre of the drain as per the revenue sketch. While some apartments exist in the area, their buffer zones have not been formally fixed, as they were constructed prior to NGT's previous order on buffer areas for stormwater drains and nallahs.

Earlier, the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) filed a report stating that it had not granted consent to Bhoo Sai Charana for the residential township and development project. The project is under 10 acres and does not fall under the purview of KSPCB, as there is no requirement for a sewage treatment plant.

The NGT order now requires GBA to take necessary steps to remove the temple encroachment, ensuring compliance with buffer zone regulations and protecting the stormwater drain's integrity.

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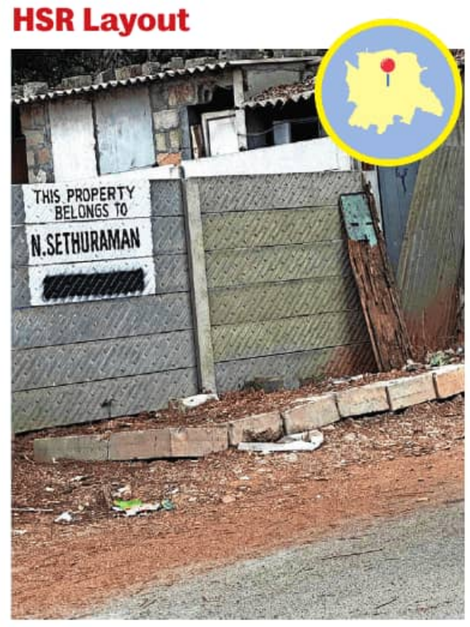
Roadside debris
HSR Layout



At 21st Cross, 7th Sector, HSR Layout, construction debris from a recently built house is blocking the footpath on the opposite side of the road.

Footpath broken
Marathahalli

Broken slabs on the stretch between Marathahalli Market and Yemalur Junction are posing a serious safety risk to commuters.

Roadside clutter
Residency Road

Multiple flex banners have appeared at the junction of Residency Road and Museum Road in Ward 111, raising concerns about their permission and necessity.

Not fines, but memes will make Gen Z follow road rules

Memes, movie clips and trending audio power Bengaluru Traffic Police's digital safety push

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In a medium where traffic advisories often get lost in timelines flooded with reels and trends, the Bengaluru Traffic Police have found an unlikely but effective ally. Swapping stiff warnings for humour and pop culture, the department has sustained a meme-first outreach strategy on Instagram and X, using viral songs and trends such as the nihilist penguin. The Joint Commissioner of Traffic says tangible changes have been brought about among Gen Z and millennials.

Bengaluru records an average of 23,767 traffic violations every day, with riding without helmets emerging as the most common offence. Data shows that only about 25 per cent of riders regularly wear helmets, while nearly 16 per cent of pillion riders fail to use any protective gear. However, ground reports from traffic police paint a grimmer picture, with nearly 39 per cent of riders and 25 per cent of pillion passengers spotted without helmets. Despite widespread awareness of the risks, including penalties and the possibility of fatal injuries, violations continue unabated, with someone breaking the rule almost every minute.

From the widely shared "People" audio clip to the viral Penguin Walking meme, traffic updates now arrive wrapped in internet humour. A recent post featuring the waddling penguin carried a caption reminding motorists to "walk, don't rush, follow signals", while another used a trending format to drive home road safety messages. The posts quickly clocked thousands of likes, shares and comments, with far higher engagement than traditional advisories.

Recently, a post that went viral on social media featured a clip from the Tom Cruise film Mission: Impossible

Traffic police took cue from the recent viral nihilistic penguin meme

– Fallout, showing the actor riding a bike at high speed without a helmet before meeting with an accident. The post carried the message: "Even Tom Cruise is not safe on a bike — what makes you think you are?"

It went on to stress that roads carry countless lives every day, and that one small mistake can change everything. It urged motorists to follow traffic signals, stay in their lanes, use indicators before turning, and give others enough time to react. Two-wheeler riders, including pillion passengers, were advised to always wear helmets. Car occupants were reminded to wear seatbelts, not just the driver. The message also emphasised keeping phones away while driving, avoiding drink-driving, and maintaining a safe distance from other vehicles, stating that every rule followed protects not just you, but everyone around you.

Officials say the idea is simple: speak the language of young commuters. Joint Commissioner of Traffic Karthik Reddy said their social media teams closely track trends and study how Gen Z connects online. "To create awareness, you have to align with what is trending in society at that point in time. We have an excellent social media team that works on this. Our aim is to target Gen Z and millennials," he said.

Further, Reddy explained that although the changes may appear small, they are steadily influencing public behaviour. "Achieving complete traffic discipline will take time, but we are already noticing gradual shifts. Our outreach has expanded significantly. Earlier, our posts received limited views, but now several videos garner thousands, and even millions, of views," he said.

He added that the response from citizens has been encouraging and measurable. "Many posts have crossed over a lakh views, with people tagging friends, resharing the content, and actively engaging with it. Users often respond with emojis or comments acknowledging the message, showing that the awareness is reaching them," he noted.

Speaking to two traffic police officials, both cited similar reasons for helmet violations. "Some youngsters think riding without a helmet looks 'cool', while others claim they were in a hurry. Many often give excuses related to hairstyles or lifestyle choices. We've also noticed riders performing stunts like wheeling for social media. Not only are they breaking traffic rules, but riding without helmets also puts their lives and the safety of others at serious risk," an official said.

Traffic officials further said they have been conducting both physical and social media awareness campaigns to reach a wider audience. "Through social media, the message reaches people personally and spreads quickly. Even during long waits in traffic, commuters tend to scroll on their phones, and those travelling in autos or buses often view and share these posts with friends," they explained.

Officials say signal drives reach few commuters.. "If posts boost helmet and lane rule compliance, they work." a senior official added.

With daily violations running into five figures, officers are ditching dull advisories for pop-culture hooks on Instagram and X, targeting younger commuters through humour-led posts that o utperform traditional warnings but continue to battle stubborn riding habits on city roads

No toll stops on B'luru-Mysuru highway

Commuters on the Bengaluru–Mysuru national highway may soon drive through toll plazas without slowing down. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) plans to roll out a GPS-based toll collection system along the 117 km stretch, doing away with the need for vehicles to line up at toll booths. This will make it Karnataka's first highway to adopt a multi-lane free-flow system aimed at uninterrupted movement and shorter travel time. Tenders for the project have already been floated, officials said, adding that the system will be introduced on a pilot basis.

Sources said that under the new set-up, tolls will be collected automatically using number-plate recognition cameras and satellite-based GPS, linked to FASTag. Vehicles will be charged while moving at normal speed, with no need to stop. During the trial phase, existing FASTag booths will continue as issues are identified and resolved, after which toll booths will be removed in phases. NHAI officials said the system has already proved successful on a section of National Highway 48 in Gujarat, where congestion has eased and travel time has reduced. "Satellite-based tolling will eliminate waiting and traffic build-up at plazas, improve fuel efficiency and ensure smoother travel," said regional officer Vilas P Brahmankar, adding that the Bengaluru–Mysuru highway could soon become the state's first toll-booth-free corridor. –BMB

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Food at city PGs leaving bad taste in the mouth

PG food scandals erupt in Bengaluru, with residents citing filthy kitchens, cockroaches, rats, and rising medical bills

Paying guest accommodations across Bengaluru are increasingly being flagged as trouble spots, with residents alleging poor food quality, unhygienic kitchens and dining areas, and rising health issues linked to substandard meals. The city has an estimated 20,000 PGs housing lakhs of migrants who have moved here for education and work, but many complain that owners fail to provide even basic facilities. Adding to the concern is the absence of reliable government data on the exact number of PGs, with no comprehensive survey conducted so far. Official records show that only 2,193 PGs were registered under the Greater Bengaluru Administration (GBA) Act as of April 2025.

While the Greater Bengaluru Administration Act, 2024 lays down clear norms to protect the health and safety of PG residents, including strict guidelines on kitchen hygiene and food quality, compliance appears poor. Mandatory displays such as food safety boards, FSSAI licences, helpline numbers, weekly menus, water quality reports and health records of cooks are missing in most PGs, residents allege.

"The food quality was bad and the kitchen was filthy in the PG I stayed in at Rajajinagar," said Mohammed Sadiq, a software professional. Others echoed similar concerns. "There are no certificates on display, no owner or warden in sight, and even calls to the GBA helpline go unanswered," said Navya Joseph, a college student. Another student, Mamata Kashbyap, said vegetables and grains are cooked without washing, while cockroaches and rats roam the kitchen, forcing residents to spend on medical bills. –BMB

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Hopes from Budget 2026

State fears ₹9,000 crore loss, demands compensation

Ahead of Union Budget 2026, K'taka urges Centre to address revenue shortfalls, equitable allocations, and strengthen cooperative federalism principles

Despite being the country's second highest GST revenue contributor, Karnataka is facing fears of an annual loss of nearly 9,000 crore following the revision of GST slabs. The state government is now seeking a compensation mechanism similar to the earlier GST compensation cess to offset the projected shortfall. With committed expenditure rising every year and nearly ₹50,000 crore needed annually for guarantees, Karnataka is looking to the Union Budget 2026–27 for relief, including advance releases, clearance of pending dues, and special grants.

A senior official from the finance department said, "The shift from a four slab to a two slab GST structure has already slowed GST growth in the state, with officials estimating a ₹5,000 crore loss in 2025–26 alone, adding to fiscal pressure." The state has argued that while the Centre has imposed cesses on pan masala and higher excise on tobacco to offset losses, no concrete mechanism has been put in place to compensate states for revenue shortfalls.

Karnataka has also renewed its demands for the release of ₹5,300 crore announced for the Upper Bhadra project, clearance of pending Jal Jeevan Mission funds, equitable ethanol procurement norms, and approvals for key irrigation projects. With several resolutions passed in the Belagavi session awaiting action, the state is keenly watching whether the Centre will respond to its demands and ensure Karnataka gets its due share of revenue and support.

A vendor sells vegetables at a market, ahead of the presentation of the Union Budget 2026–27 by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in Chikkamagaluru, on Saturday

"The shift from a four slab to a two slab GST structure has already slowed GST growth in the state, with officials estimating a ₹5,000 crore loss in 2025–26 alone, adding to fiscal pressure

– Finance Dept official

Cooperative federalism

Ahead of the Union Budget 2026, K'taka Law Minister HK Patil emphasised the need for the budget to strengthen India's federal structure and promote cooperative federalism. Patil urged Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to instil confidence in the federal bodies and ensure the Centre addresses all aspects. He questioned how the budget would address the alleged injustices done to South India, particularly Karnataka, regarding the allocation of funds. He pointed out that Karnataka contributes significantly to the Government of India's kitty but receives less than 15% of the funds.

Patil added, "What is important is how this budget is going to make people confident in the federal structure and how cooperative federalism will really work in India. We have heard a lot of things in the six months about the injustice being done to South India, particularly Karnataka. The money that was assured has not been given; the proper allocation has not been made... How can Karnataka get less than 15% out of what we contribute to the Government of India's kitty? How is this going to be answered by Nirmala Sitharaman? Ultimately, they will have to instil confidence in the federal bodies that they are taking care of all aspects... This is something that the Government of India should take very seriously." He also criticised the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, which replaces the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. "This VB-G RAM G law should be disbanded. MGNREGA should be re-established to help rural areas flourish in the future," he added.

–BMB and ANI

Industry calls for tourism-centric budget vision

Budget 2026–27 must back tourism with clear policies, incentives and infrastructure support, industry leaders say

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As the Union Government prepares Budget 2026–27, leaders from tourism and transport sectors are urging a decisive policy shift that treats tourism as a core driver of India's economic growth. Industry stakeholders say the Budget must go beyond allocations and serve as a clear policy declaration defining long-term direction of tourism and passenger transport.

Radhakrishna Holla, President of Karnataka State Travel Owners' Association (R) and Director at FKCCI, said government must create a structured, supportive ecosystem for organised tourism operators and has submitted a memorandum outlining demands. "Budget 2026–27 must be more than a financial document. It should be a bold policy statement defining future of tourism and passenger transport in India. If tourism is to become a national priority sector, we need clear, long-term, actionable policies, not fragmented short-term schemes," he said.

Holla stressed need for simplified licensing procedures, reduced regulatory fees, incentives for fleet modernisation, and provision of free or long-term route and flying permits to strengthen organised tourism services. Infrastructure development at tourist destinations, regulation of excessive parking and entry fees, and concessional toll rates for passenger vehicles on major tourist corridors were highlighted as urgent priorities.

He further pointed out India must address global perception of being an expensive tourism destination. "Changing this perception and positioning India as an affordable, high-value, quality destination is responsibility of Central Government. Every rupee invested in tourism multiplies into employment, local economic activity and national revenue. Tourism must be treated as primary engine of economic growth," he said.

"If tourism is to become a national priority sector, we need clear, long-term and actionable policies, not fragmented short-term schemes

– Radhakrishna Holla President, KSTOA (R), Director, FKCCI

Raising concerns over increasing shift of destination weddings, corporate events and mega conferences abroad, Holla called for special incentive schemes, tax benefits and infrastructure support for MICE tourism, warning India is losing major domestic spending opportunities.He also proposed income tax deductions on domestic travel expenses to boost household travel, removal of interstate check-posts for seamless passenger mobility, and extension of UDAN regional air connectivity scheme for another decade, particularly for Tier-2 cities, heritage sites and tourist hubs.

Calling for long-term vision, he urged launch of a national mission to develop new natural, heritage, pilgrimage and cultural destinations, while integrating AYUSH, yoga, traditional arts and culture into global tourism promotion efforts nationwide.

Ballari leads unauthorised property count

Karnataka has an estimated 4.5 lakh unauthorised properties compared with nearly 25 lakh authorised ones, with Ballari city recording the highest among major municipal corporations. Ballari leads with 24,399 unauthorised properties, followed by Davanagere with 14,973 and Kalaburagi with 10,495. Mangaluru has the lowest at 1,378. To address this, the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department rolled out e-Swathu 2.0 software to issue B-khata, or e-property, documents for revenue sites and houses in panchayat layouts within municipal limits. Urban local bodies have begun the process, but technical glitches at taluk and gram panchayat levels are delaying rollout. Officials estimate 1.45 crore properties will eventually be covered. Despite server problems, authorities report 60–70 per cent property tax collection this year. **–BMB**

Fewer illegal mining cases, mixed penalties

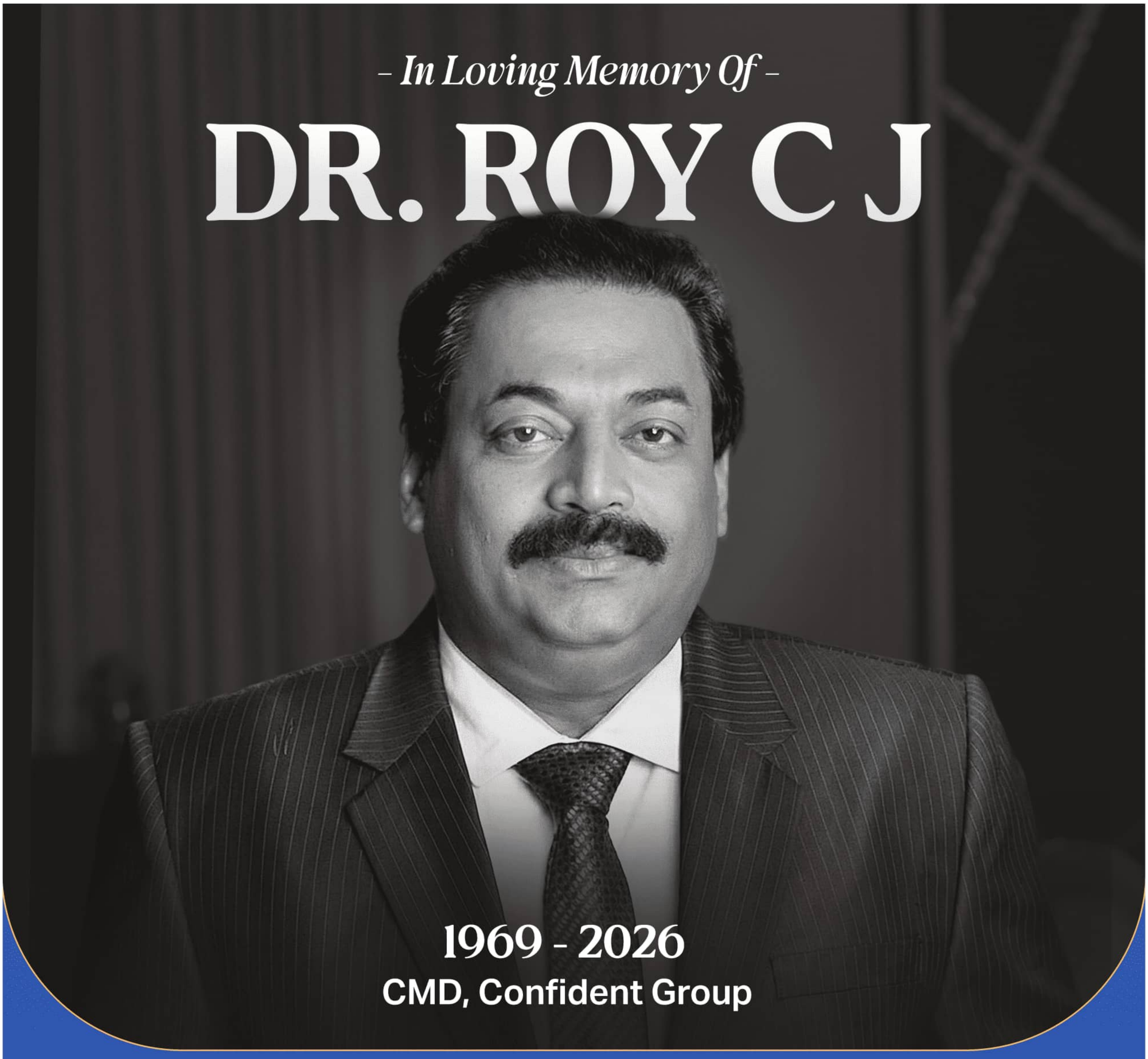
Cases related to illegal stone and sand mining in Karnataka have recorded a clear decline over the past two years, though the trend in penalties imposed remains mixed, according to data tabled by Minister for Mines and Geology SS Mallikarjun in the Legislative Council. Data shows cases of illegal stone mining dropped from 657 in 2024–25 to 553 in 2025–26, marking a decline of nearly 16 percent. Penalties collected also fell sharply, from Rs 715.83 lakh to Rs 489.82 lakh, a reduction of about 32 percent. Meanwhile, the number of registered cases decreased marginally from 186 to 171, a drop of just over 8 percent.In the case of illegal sand mining, the decline was sharper. Detected cases fell from 219 to 122, a reduction of 44 percent, while registered cases dropped from 126 to 58, down by 54 percent. However, penalties rose from Rs 75.98 lakh to Rs 88.16 lakh, indicating higher fines per offence. **–BMB**

Transformer blast injures five in Bidar

A transformer blast on the side of a highway in Bidar district critically injured several people, including school children, on Sunday. Shivayogi Bali, surgeon at BIMS Hospital, said 18-year-old Anwar and 65-year-old Jabbar were critically injured, suffering head, eye, and crush injuries. "The transformer on the highway in Bidar district blasted, injuring five people in Molakera village, Humnabad Taluk. Two are severely injured. Anwar suffered crush injuries to his foot and left hand, an eyeball injury, and head injury. Primary treatment has been provided," he said. Bali added that three children, aged four, five, and eight, were also injured on their way to school. "In total, five people—two adults, three children—are severely injured. We are taking care of them," he said. Further details are awaited. **–ANI**

– In Loving Memory Of –

DR. ROY C J



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Dr. Roy C J, age 56, passed away on January 30th 2026.

Born on February 12th 1969 in Bengaluru, Karnataka was the son of Thresia C K & late C.V Joseph. He will be remembered for his dedication to his family, his strong character, and the respect he showed to all who knew him.

He is survived by his wife Liny Roy and children Rohit Sebastian Roy and Ria Mary Roy, his brothers Joshy C J and Babu C J, and family Sujay, Rahul, Meghana, Sneha and Chahat.

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BENGALURU SPEAKS

and gets heard on this page

STORY BEHIND THE PHOTO

MUNNAR HIBISCUS BLOOM

Our reader shares a striking image of a double-petaled orange hibiscus blooming in a lush Munnar garden, showcasing the flower's large, showy, funnel-shaped beauty.

The picture was clicked by reader **NJ Ravi Chander**

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com**

Two skywalks: One success, other stalled on Ring Road

Functional Chandralayout skywalk boosts safety, while Hosakerehalli structure remains incomplete and largely unused despite heavy pedestrian demand

The erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) began the installation of two skywalks along Puneet Rajkumar Road (Ring Road) back in 2020, aiming to ease pedestrian movement and improve safety for commuters. While the skywalk behind Sri Durgaparameshwari Temple in Chandra Layout (Ward 131, Nayandhalli) has been fully functional since its inauguration, the one in front of the BSNL Telephone Exchange at Hosakerehalli (Ward 161, BSK 3rd Stage) remains largely unused, highlighting gaps in infrastructure delivery.

BM readers who surveyed the area said the Chandra Layout skywalk, equipped with sophisticated lifts, was inaugurated on September 18. Locals, including students and office-goers, have been regularly using the facility. "I use this skywalk daily to reach my college. The lifts make it very convenient, especially for students carrying heavy bags," said Ruchita, a student of DPN Law College.

Above: Functional Chandra Layout skywalk; Below: Stalled Hosakerehalli skywalk. Residents say completing it would benefit students, office-goers and other pedestrians.

In contrast, the Hosakerehalli skywalk, meant to serve a busy stretch in front of the BSNL Telephone Exchange, was left incomplete after only its skeletal structure was installed. Lifts that were initially brought to the site were later shifted elsewhere, leaving the skywalk largely inaccessible. "This skywalk

A stark contrast on Puneet Rajkumar Road exposes how unfinished urban projects deny thousands safe crossings, even as neighbouring completed infrastructure proves its daily value

could be extremely useful for students of Little Flower Public School, DPN Law College and Gupta College, as well as officials visiting the 3rd Stage Post Office or the State Education Research and Training Office. But without lifts, very few people attempt to climb the steps," said Vinay Kumar, a resident and daily commuter.

BM readers observed that only occasional pedestrians try to use the Hosakerehalli skywalk, often struggling up the stairs, while most avoid it entirely. Several institutions around the structure, including Anugraha Vittal Multi-Speciality Hospital, Little Flower Public School and the State Education Research and Training Office, depend heavily on pedestrian access, making the incomplete facility a serious concern. "The skywalk is essential, especially for school and college students who risk accidents while crossing the busy Ring Road," said a BM reader, adding that the Greater Bengaluru Administration (GBA) must prioritise completing the project with functional lifts in 2026.

The stark contrast between the two skywalks on the same arterial road reflects broader challenges in urban infrastructure delivery. While Chandra Layout demonstrates how such facilities can improve commuter safety, Hosakerehalli stands as a reminder of projects still waiting to truly serve the public. **— BMB**

DID YOU KNOW?

New research suggests that while attacking a healthy adult Brachiosaurus would have been nearly suicidal for Jurassic predators, baby and juvenile sauropods were likely a staple food source for meat-eating dinosaurs about 150 million years ago. Scientists reconstructed the food web of the Dry Mesa Dinosaur Quarry ecosystem in southwestern Colorado, revealing a landscape teeming with diverse life, including at least six sauropod species and five major theropods. Although giants such as Brachiosaurus, Diplodocus, Supersaurus and Apatosaurus grew to immense sizes, their hatchlings were tiny, slow, and apparently left to fend for themselves. Lacking armor or defensive weapons, young sauropods were far easier targets than armored dinosaurs like Stegosaurus. Top predators such as Torvosaurus and Allosaurus were formidable, but even they would have faced extreme danger attacking fully grown sauropods. A single tail strike or body movement could fatally injure a hunter. Consequently, predators likely focused on juveniles, weakened adults, trapped individuals, or carcasses. **— Reuters**

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As cold hits, Trump asks, where's global warming? Scientists say it's still here

THE CLAIM: Trump argues extreme U S cold disproves global warming, calling temperatures unprecedented and labelling climate scientists' environmental insurrectionists while questioning how warming exists during widespread winter storms.
FACT: Scientists say global warming continues; recent years are hottest on record. Local cold weather doesn't contradict long-term global trends, and historic cold extremes were often colder than current forecasts.

President Donald Trump's social media post questioning global warming during a major U S winter storm has once again highlighted widespread public confusion between short-term weather events and long-term climate trends. While the country grapples with severe cold, ice and snow, scientists say such conditions do not contradict the reality of a warming planet. Instead, they underscore the complexity of Earth's climate system.

Climate experts emphasise that global warming refers to long-term changes in average temperatures worldwide, not the temperature in one place on a single day. Even in a warming world, winters and cold spells still occur. According to scientists, the past three years have been the warmest on record globally, with winter temperatures rising significantly since the mid-1990s. Although the United States has warmed more slowly than the global average, it is still warmer today than it was decades ago. Researchers point out that while much of the eastern United States is currently experiencing unusually cold conditions, large parts of the rest of the world are warmer than average. Regions including Europe, Canada, Africa, the Arctic and parts of Asia are seeing above-normal temperatures. This uneven distribution of warmth and cold is typical of a changing climate and does not negate overall warming.

Some scientists are also studying a possible link between a rapidly warming Arctic and more frequent extreme winter outbreaks in North America. The theory suggests that reduced temperature differences between the Arctic and mid-latitudes may weaken the jet stream, allowing cold Arctic air to plunge south more often. However, experts stress this is an active area of research with uncertainties, and not every cold event can be attributed to climate change. Historical records further challenge claims that current cold spells are unprecedented. Many U S cities experienced far colder and more prolonged cold waves in the early and mid-20th century. Meteorologists note that today's cold can feel more shocking partly because people are less accustomed to severe winters as average temperatures have risen.

Data on temperature records also support the broader warming trend. Far more daily high-temperature records are being set in recent years than record lows. Scientists say this imbalance is a strong indicator of long-term warming, even when occasional extreme cold occurs. Overall, experts agree that severe winter weather and global warming are not mutually exclusive. Short-term cold snaps reflect natural weather variability, while climate change is measured over decades and across the entire planet. The scientific consensus remains firm: the Earth is warming, and that trend is continuing despite periodic bouts of extreme cold. **— AP**

Coexistence is best way forward for survival, remind animal lovers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

observations made by the apex court during the ongoing proceedings.

"The dogs have never caused disturbance, and they are friendly. Ironically, despite this, few dogs are hurt and killed over months, and also beaten up. Due to misinformation and misinterpretation of the Supreme Court's recent observations circulating in the media, hostility has risen. Two days ago, I was stopped from feeding, verbally abused, threatened, and more than 10 men ganged up on me," recounts Nair.

She says feeding and stray dog management by her is done transparently, with awareness of authorities concerned, and the entire expense is borne by her.

Animal welfare workers and feeders in the city say that while feeding community dogs is legal and protected under Indian law, harassing feeders or denying food to sterilised, vaccinated dogs is unlawful. What is unfolding is not law enforcement but fear-driven mob behaviour, they said.

Savitha Bhavsar, a resident of Thanisandra, who feeds four street dogs in a bylane in RBI layout, says she is used to a couple in the area piling abuses and showing up with a stick in hand.

"Following SC's order in August, they hinted that they would poison the dogs if we did not stop feeding them. I had to call the police to get help. I continued feeding and then, after a few months, saw a couple of the dogs missing," claims Bhavsar.

Shalini, an IT professional living in Srirampura, Jakkur, along with her husband, takes care of nearly 60 stray dogs in the area. However, following SC's observation on January 13, they went through a horrendous experience.

The SC, on January 13, while hearing the ongoing stray dog case, made an oral observation indicating that authorities and dog feeders may be held liable in case of dog bite cases. The observation was highlighted by the media, leading to

Shalini and her husband facing assault by a mob.

"The mob, visibly angry, approached us while we were feeding the dogs during morning hours. They told us that they will hold us accountable in case of any dog bites, as remarked by one of the SC judges. Some of them approached my husband with the intention of physically assaulting him. This is when I called Hoysala for help. While we were advised to file an FIR against the people who assaulted us, we decided to drop the matter, fearing it would have repercussions on the innocent animals," recounts Shalini.

Aarti (name changed), a resident of Doddakallasandra, who manages and feeds 36 street dogs in the area, says that SC's verbal remarks and order passed in August have sort of extended license to anti-feeder vigilantes to harass feeders, especially women.

She says that while many residents in the area did not support feeding stray dogs earlier as well, they have become hostile now. Even stranger passers-by hurl abuse when they encounter Aarti feeding the dogs.

"I feed my community animals late at night. One day, a person on a two-wheeler saw me feeding dogs and hurled a stone at me and rode away. Many times, those passing by in cars refer to SC's remarks while harassing me for feeding the animals," says Aarti.

Experts estimate that feeders' population across the country is hardly 0.5 percent. Metro cities have more feeders due to a higher dog population, owing to various factors. However, targeting these citizens who stood up when governance failed is a clear case of criminalising compassion. It is more condemnable when none of the municipal bodies, including Bengaluru's Greater Bengaluru Authority, has official data to prove feeders are the reason for dog bites, they said.

"It is unfortunate that the SC's statements are leading to destruction of the very group of citizens that can play a pivotal role in reducing man-dog conflict. Unfortunately, a few citizen groups with vested interests are misquoting these statements to harass feeders and animals without understanding that coexistence is the basis of the survival of the human race," said Sadhana Hegde, founder of Sahavarthin Animal Welfare Trust, a city-based NGO.

'Traffic police never send APK files to collect fines'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

On January 16, a 45-year-old software engineer lodged a police complaint after being cheated in a phishing scam involving a fake traffic challan payment link. According to police, the victim received a text message claiming a pending traffic fine of ₹500. He clicked on the link and attempted to make the payment. Although the website displayed ₹500, ₹5 lakh was fraudulently debited from his credit card after he entered his details. The victim immediately alerted his bank and later approached the police. Another 53-year-old recently lost ₹3.03 lakh to the same modus operandi.

"The common thread in these frauds is the distribution of malicious APK files or links via messaging platforms like WhatsApp. Recipients receive alerts about alleged traffic violations, complete with vehicle details, and are prompted to click links or install apps to view or pay the supposed fines. Once installed, these rogue applications can take control of the victim's device, steal sensitive data, intercept one-time passwords, and facilitate unauthorised transactions," says Chetan Anand, National Cyber Security Scholar and Cybercrime Intervention Officer Joint commissioner of Traffic Karthik Reddy explains that scams like these tend to surge during periods when authorities announce discounts on fines or conduct special enforcement drives. "The public must note and

remember that we don't send any such messages or collect fines from vehicle owners through APK files. It's the tactic of cyber frauds to make a victim fall in a trap," he said.

Police officials urged citizens to remain vigilant, avoid clicking on unsolicited links, verify any traffic fines only through official government portals such as BTP Astram or Karnataka state police app and report suspicious messages to the national cyber crime helpline 1930. Apart from this, the fine can also be paid by directly going to the Traffic management centre.

Chetan Anand warned against making payments in haste or under pressure of legal threats, and stressed the importance of verifying challan details only through official government websites or authorised apps. "People should never share debit or credit card details, CVV numbers, OTPs or personal information with unknown platforms. Messages containing shortened links or urgent payment demands should be ignored," he said.

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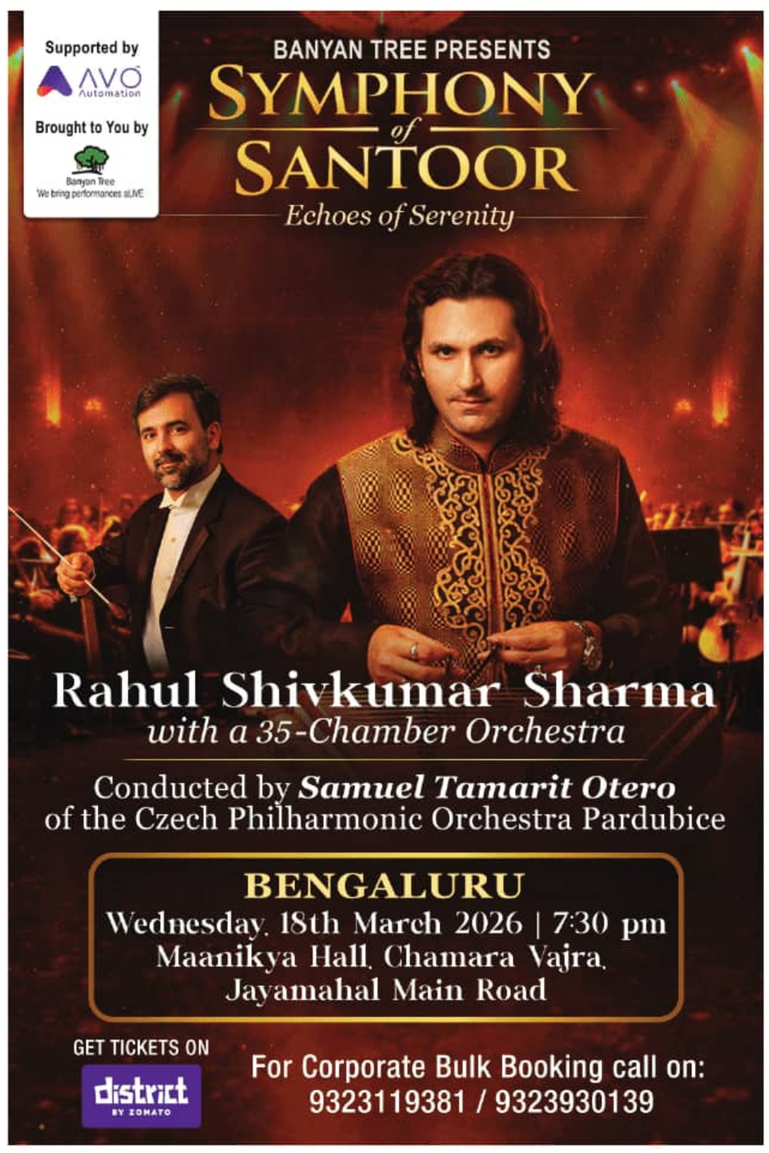

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Central Command Centre inaugurated to strengthen prison monitoring & reforms

In a big step towards strengthening prison administration and surveillance, Karnataka Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara on Saturday inaugurated the Central Command Centre at the headquarters of the State Prisons and Correctional Services Department, which is now monitoring 1,076 CCTV cameras installed in eight central prisons and four district prisons. This includes 332 cameras in Bengaluru Central Jail equipped with artificial intrusion detection and crowd analysis systems. A team of 20 personnel monitors the feeds 24/7 to ensure security and quick response.

The facilities under watch include prisons in Bengaluru, Mysuru, Shivamogga, Ballari, Dharwad, Belagavi, Kalaburagi and Vijayapura, along with district prisons in Mangaluru, Tumakuru, Bengaluru South and Chamarajanagar. Officials said CCTV coverage in all district and taluk prisons will soon be integrated into the system.

During the inauguration, Parameshwara said the government has entrusted prison officials with the responsibility of reforming inmates and bringing them back into the mainstream with sincerity and care. He stressed that negligence could weaken the entire system and urged officers to work honestly and responsibly, guided by their conscience. He said strict monitoring would prevent illegal activities and improve administration. Emphasising that corrections are more important than punishment, he noted that nearly 2,500 prisoners were reformed during his tenure. He also called for better use of technology, staff recruitment, and teamwork to strengthen the department.

Recent inspections have already exposed lapses. Disciplinary action was taken against a warder for failing to properly check the visitors' room. Another warder was transferred for allowing a police personnel to meet an accused inmate without authorisation, while a head guard received a warning. **BMB**

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I, Jamie Ralph Vaz, D/o Fulsheri Pascol Soaz, residing at Trinity Meadows, Bellandur, Bangalore 560103, have changed my name to Jamie Vaz for all purposes as per affidavit dated 28/01/2026 sworn before P. Nanjunda, Notary Public, Bangalore.

I, Preethi Keshava, W/o Santosh GS, 158/43, 4th cross Chikkalasandra Bank colony, Bengaluru have changed my name from Preethi Keshava to Preethi Santosh.

I, Rohit Mohite Changed My Name To Rohit Uday Mohite Vide Affidavit Dated 30-01-2026. Sworn Before Notary Hegde Ganapati Venkataraman, Bengaluru

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I, Nasira Ahmed, w/o Jameel Ahmed, R/o No-98/A KHB Colony 17th Cross, 5th Block Koramangala, B'luru-560095 have changed my name to Nasira Bano for all Purposes.

I, Smruti Ghanshyam Wankhade Changed My Name To Smruti Ghanshyamrao Wankhade Vide Affidavit Dated 30-01-2026. Sworn Before Notary Hegde Ganapati Venkataraman, Bengaluru

I Belurkar Seema Mohan W/O, Vinay Gad R/o #214 A Block U Kay Namma Mane Apartment Cv Raman Road Kodipalya Kengeri Bangalore 560060 have changed my name to Seema Belurkar for all purposes.

I, Mohammed Ummar R/o No 514/1 Church Side Kushalnagar Taluk Kodagu 571253 Have Changed My Name to Mohammed U for All Purposes.

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I, BHARATH KUMAR V, S/o, Late Venkatachalla Jetty, R/a No. No.291, 6th A Cross, BSK 3rd Stage, Srinivasnagar, Bangalore - 560050 have lost my Absolute Sale Deed Pertaining to Residential Site No 27, Khatha No. 150200300700821559, "Rajarajeshwari Residency", Sy.No.129, Chunchanakuppe Village, Thavarekere Hobli, Bangalore, Vide Document No. RRN-1-03095-2016-17. Regarding this, Complaint (No. 2034223/2026) dated: 29.01.2026 has been filed. If anybody finds the document, please inform the above address or contact J M. JAGADISH GOWDA, 7676123456.

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As musculoskeletal disorders emerge as common occupational health hazard, expert suggests ways that companies can help

Slouch! Work hurts

Rachana Ramesh
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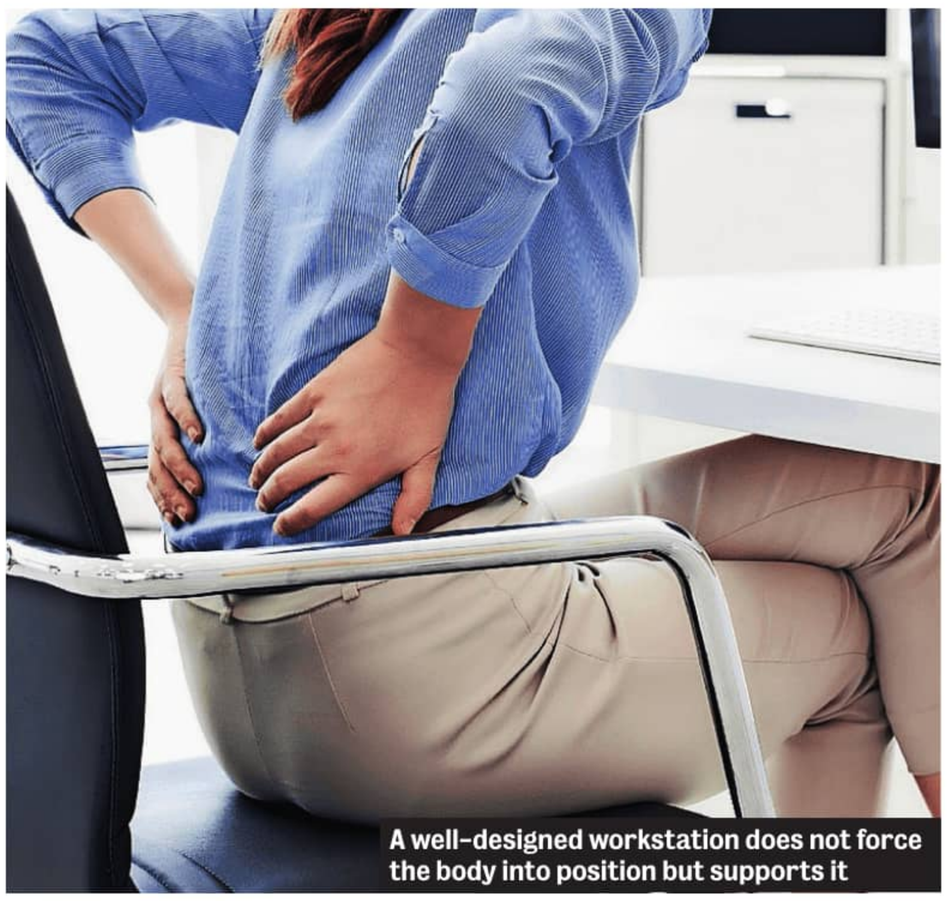

A well-designed workstation does not force the body into position but supports it

As workdays stretch longer and screens dominate professional life, a growing number of employees are reporting pain in their eyes, necks, backs and wrists. With people spending eight to nine hours seated each day—often hunched over laptops on poorly designed desks—musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are emerging as one of the most common occupational health concerns across sectors.

Health professionals and workplace designers warn that the problem lies with environments that ignore human physical and cognitive limits. They argue that offices must be designed to fit the user, rather than forcing the user to adapt to rigid, outdated setups.

According to ergonomics specialist Bharati Jajoo, Director of Ergonomics and Physiotherapy at Happiest Health, the most common issues seen among people working extensively on laptops and desktops are cumulative, repetitive strain patterns rather than sudden injuries. "We frequently see neck and upper-back strain or the classic 'tech neck' pattern, where the head drifts forward and the shoulders round. This often comes with stiffness and headaches," she said.

Wrist and hand problems are also increasingly common. Jajoo noted that awkward wrist angles and constant clicking or scrolling can cause tingling, numbness and pain. "Thumb tendon irritation from heavy scrolling or trackpad use is something we're seeing a lot now, with people reporting pain near the base of the thumb and reduced grip comfort," she said.

Lower-body discomfort is another overlooked issue. Poor seating often causes the pelvis to roll back, removing natural spinal support and leading to low-back pain. "Hip and knee discomfort can also show up when the hip slides forward and the foot is tucked or crossed beneath the seat," she explained. While posture awareness is often emphasised, Jajoo said workplace design plays a more decisive role. "It's linked to both, but design sets the stage," she said. "If the workstation quietly pushes the body into strain, even a disciplined person will eventually experience fatigue."

From an ergonomic standpoint, a well-designed workstation does not force the body into position but supports it so that neutral posture becomes the easiest option. "A good setup invites posture rather than demands it," Jajoo said. She explained that screens should be positioned so the top third is near eye level, elbows should rest comfortably at about 90 to 100 degrees, and wrists should remain neutral without excessive reaching. "Feet need to be supported, hips are often more comfortable slightly higher than the knees, and back support is essential to maintain the spine's natural curve," she added.

There are differences between office and work-from-home injury patterns. In offices, problems often stem from static sitting and lack of movement. At home, people work from beds, sofas or dining chairs

Expecting workers to constantly correct their posture in poorly designed setups is unrealistic, she said. "Humans are efficiency machines, not posture robots. When the setup is wrong, the body chooses the lowest-energy option," she said. Over time, muscles fatigue and the body collapses into passive postures, placing stress on joints and ligaments. This can lead to clusters of conditions known as repetitive stress injuries (RSI) or cumulative trauma disorders (CTD).

The effects of prolonged screen use are not limited to the musculoskeletal system. Jajoo described what she called "hidden fatigue" caused by extended screen exposure. "People blink less when looking at screens, which leads to dryness, blurriness and headaches—often referred to as computer vision strain," she said.

Cognitive fatigue is another consequence. Constant switching between tasks, tabs and notifications drains mental stamina. By the end of the day, people feel foggy, irritable and completely spent. Laptop-centric work cultures, she warned, are especially problematic when not supported by proper accessories. "Laptops are built for portability, not for eight-hour work performance while maintaining the user's health," she said. She said a basic "laptop safety kit" should include a laptop stand along with an external keyboard and mouse, or a separate monitor if possible.

There are also clear differences between office and work-from-home injury patterns. In offices, problems often stem from static sitting and lack of movement. At home, many employees work from beds, sofas or dining chairs. "Soft-surface work does not stabilise the pelvis. The comfort is deceptive. The spine collapses into a C-shape and the neck compensates. People also tend to work longer without natural breaks," Jajoo said.

One professional recalled developing severe shoulder pain around 2006, which was later diagnosed as spondylitis by an orthopaedic specialist. "I was advised to stay away from my computer for a month," they said. While the break brought some relief, the pain did not fully subside. The turning point came when their company introduced some changes. With the introduction of a keyboard gel pad and a cushioned mouse pad, pressure on the arms reduced significantly, allowing the shoulders to relax. The employee said these small adjustments made a lasting difference. Another 26-year-old professional told BM, "Workplaces must be designed around human capabilities, not human endurance—because health should never be the cost of productivity."

Screening, awareness helps reduce cervical cancer burden to 16% in 2025

Cervical cancer has been one of the leading cancers in women. However statistics of four decades from the Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology (KMIO)-hospital Based Cancer Registry Cervical Cancer Trend shows a decline in the number of cases. In 1984, the cancer accounted for over 42% of all female cancers treated at KMIO. Today, that figure has fallen sharply to around 15–16%, marking one of the most significant shifts of the cases marked so far.

The data shows a steady and sustained decline in the proportional burden of cervical cancer from above 40% through the 1980s, to under 30% by the early 2000s, dipping below 20% after 2016, and reaching its lowest recorded levels in recent years. In 2024, cervical cancer made up just 15.3% and 16.2% in 2025, of all female cancers.

Dr Naveen T, KMIO Director, said, "Long-term population-based and hospital-based cancer registry data show a consistent decline in cervical cancer incidence and mortality. PBCR Bengaluru data from 1982 to 2025 demonstrate an Average Annual Percentage Change (AAPC) of –1.9%, reflecting sustained progress in cervical cancer control. This decline underscores the impact of improved awareness, opportunistic screening, early diagnosis, and comprehensive treatment services provided over the past four decades."

Across Karnataka, an estimated 89,165 cancer cases were recorded in 2025. Cervical cancer accounted for 4,476 new cases (9%), with a prevalence of 11,190 and 783, deaths showing that despite declining dominance, the disease still carries a significant mortality burden.

In Bengaluru alone (PBCR 2025), total cancer cases reached 15,693, with 8,574 women diagnosed. Cervical cancer contributed to 776 new cases (9%), with a prevalence of 1,940 and 136 deaths.

Causes

Cervical cancer is largely caused by long-term infection with high-risk strains of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Major contributing factors include early marriage and early childbirth, repeated pregnancies, poor genital hygiene, tobacco use, low socioeconomic conditions, limited access to regular screening, and weakened immunity. Effective prevention depends on addressing these risks through public education, accessible screening programmes, and widespread vaccination.

Dr. Shobha K, Professor and HOD, Dept of Gynaecologic Oncology, KMIO, explained that the high number of deaths is largely due to late-stage detection. "Most patients who come to us are still diagnosed at advanced stages, Stage 3 and Stage 4. Even with treatment, recurrence rates in these stages are very high, and once recurrence occurs, the risk of death increases significantly. That is the reason we have to create awareness regarding this highly preventable cancer so that we can detect pre invasive disease and early stage cancer with screening tests like HPV DNA test, pap smear and colposcopy. So that cure rate is high and mortality reduces," the doctor said.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of the World Health Organization has firmly established that persistent HPV infection is a necessary cause of cervical cancer. IARC emphasises that a combination of HPV vaccination, routine screening through methods such as VIA, Pap smears, or HPV testing, and prompt treatment of precancerous lesions can prevent the disease making the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem an achievable goal.

Combination of HPV vaccination, routine screening and prompt treatment of precancerous lesions can prevent the disease

Across Karnataka, around 89,165 cases were recorded in 2025. Cervical cancer accounted for 4,476 new cases, with prevalence of 11,190 and 783, deaths, showing the mortality burden

Dr Naveen added, "The Government of Karnataka has enhanced screening, referral, and treatment services through district hospitals, medical colleges, and Regional Cancer Centres. Collaboration with KMIO has enabled capacity building, community screening, and evidence-based planning and free treatment with various schemes such as AB-ArK, Arogya Bhagya, KCMMR..etc for cervical cancer control across the state."

—Iffath Fathima

HEALTH TIP: Fruit with a handful of nuts or yoghurt helps stabilise blood sugar and prevents sudden energy dips

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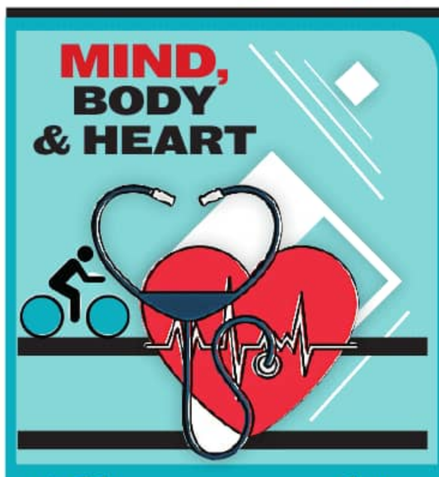

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The Ketchup Challenge

What is it?
People have been using this 'test' to check how strong the tier relationship really is. The test in itself is very simple. Just take a ketchup bottle and pour it on the kitchen counter, and that is all. The test begins, however, after the mess is created by asking your male partner to wipe off the table.

Findings
Although the task seems fairly simple, the aftermath is what makes it interesting. What women online began discovering after conducting the challenge was that some partners are not efficient enough to take up the task of cleaning up the ketchup spilt on the table.

Viral
The trend first started in December 2023 on TikTok, when a creator posted a video doing the same and asking her fiancé to clean the table. The fiance however, picked up paper towels to wipe the ketchup, in turn making the table messier. Comments were enraged at her fiancé's behaviour and called him incompetent.
The video soon went viral, garnering over 33 million views, and led many other women to test this challenge on their partners.

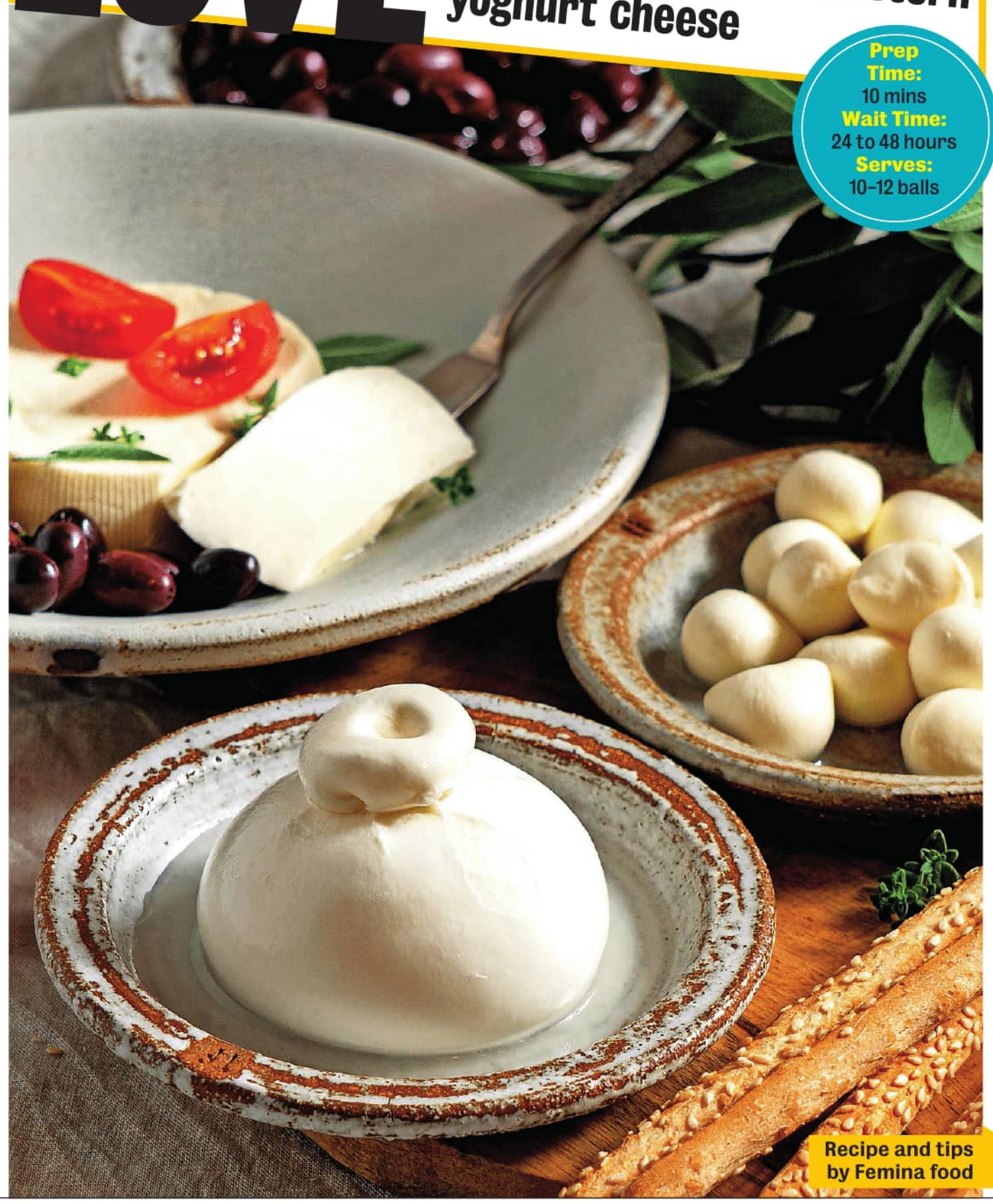
Does it work?
While internet users claim that the efficiency with which your partner wipes ketchup off the table echoes how they will handle complex situations in the relationship, it's not that simple. There is little correlation between a partner's response to ketchup and their overall ability to handle situations in their life.
Psychologists instead recommend that if you really want to know if you are in a healthy relationship, skip the ketchup challenge, have a mature conversation with your partner about contributions and sacrifices that they are willing to make for you and vice versa.

—Femina

LABNEH BALLS

LABNEH LOVE

All you need to know about a delightful Middle-Eastern yoghurt cheese



Prep Time: 10 mins
Wait Time: 24 to 48 hours
Serves: 10–12 balls

Recipe and tips by Femina food

INGREDIENTS
- 1 kg full-fat plain yogurt, ideally go with whole milk yoghurt
- 1½ tsp salt
- Extra virgin olive oil, for storing

METHOD
- Take the yoghurt in a large bowl and sprinkle the salt over it. Mix it well with a ladle.
- Place a cheesecloth or a muslin cloth over a sieve and pour the yoghurt-salt mix over it. Twist the cloth tight, tie it to start the straining process. Leave this mechanism in the refrigerator. The time you need to leave it there depends on how soft or firm you like the cheese.
- In 24 hours, you will get a soft, luscious, spreadable labneh. In 48 hours, you will get a firmer version that can be moulded into balls.
- Once strained you will have a thick, tangy and mouldable cheese. Don't discard the whey, you can use it for other dishes.
- Flavouring The Labneh
- You can enjoy the labneh as is, or even better, flavour it with different herbs.

Popular flavourings to be gently mixed into the labneh before shaping include:
- Finely-minced garlic
- Dried mint powder
- Za'atar
- White or black pepper powder
- Finely-chopped fresh herbs

MOULDING THE LABNEH
- Rub a little olive oil on your palms.
- Take about a tablespoon of labneh in your palms and gently roll it into a ball.
- Place parchment paper or butter paper on a plate.
- Mould out all the labneh balls in a similar manner and refrigerate the tray to allow them to firm up.

COATING THE LABNEH
- Till your labneh balls are firming up, keep your coatings ready. Options include classic, nuts and seeds, colourful and spicy.

Classic Options:
- Za'atar
- Dried mint
- Aleppo pepper
- Chilli flakes

Nuts & Seeds:
- Crushed pistachios
- Crushed walnuts
- Sesame seeds (toasted or raw)
- Nigella seeds
- Dried rose petals

Colourful & Spicy
- Sweet or smoked paprika
- Sumac powder
- Turmeric powder
- Cumin powder
- Coriander powder
- Herb blends
- Storing The Labneh
- Ensure you sterilise a glass jar in advance and dry it thoroughly.
- Place each coated labneh ball inside neatly.
- Pour olive oil over it until the balls are fully submerged so as there is no exposure to air.
- Seal the lid and refrigerate.

SHELF LIFE OF LABNEH
- The balls need to be refrigerated to keep well.
- Usually, the timelines of shelf life are: Plain labneh balls in oil keep for up to a month.
- Labneh with dried spices only keeps up to three weeks.
- Labneh with fresh garlic or fresh herbs will keep up to a week to 10 days maximum.
- **Note:** All labneh balls need to be stored in oil if they are not being consumed fresh.
- **Important tip:** If using fresh garlic, ensure you use the labneh within a week.
- **Also:** Freezing changes the texture of the labneh, but plain balls can be frozen for up to two months without oil. Ensure you consume what you thaw and DO NOT re-freeze.

USING LABNEH BALLS
- Labneh balls are very versatile and can be used in a variety of ways.
- As a spread on toast, sourdough, warm pita, even theplas and parathas.
- As part of a mezze platter or a cheese board with crackers, olives, veggie sticks and lavash. As a snack or dip with khakra or chips
- Tossed into salads
- A dip with roasted vegetables
- As a love addition to grain bowls
- **Tip:** A great way to store longer could be if you add the seasonings just before serving. A drizzle of fresh olive oil, lemon juice, sea salt, fresh herbs or chilli oil just before serving will elevate your cheese.

A FEW IDEAS FOR PAIRINGS
- Za'atar + olive oil + toasted pita
- Pistachio + rose petals + honey drizzle
- Smoked paprika + garlic oil
- Sumac + lemon zest
- Chilli flakes + cumin + coriander

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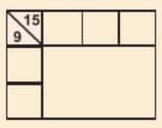
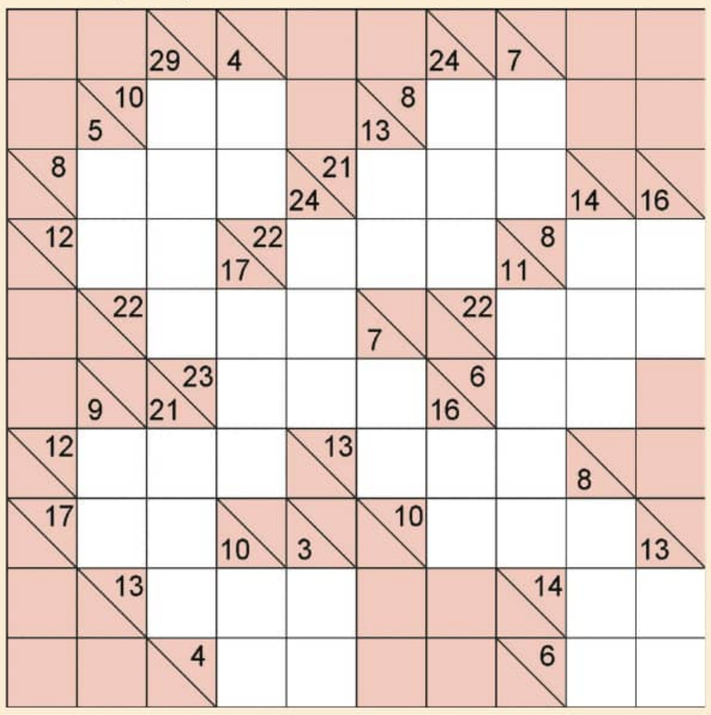
facebook.com/theBangaloremirror
@BangaloreMirror

Kakuro

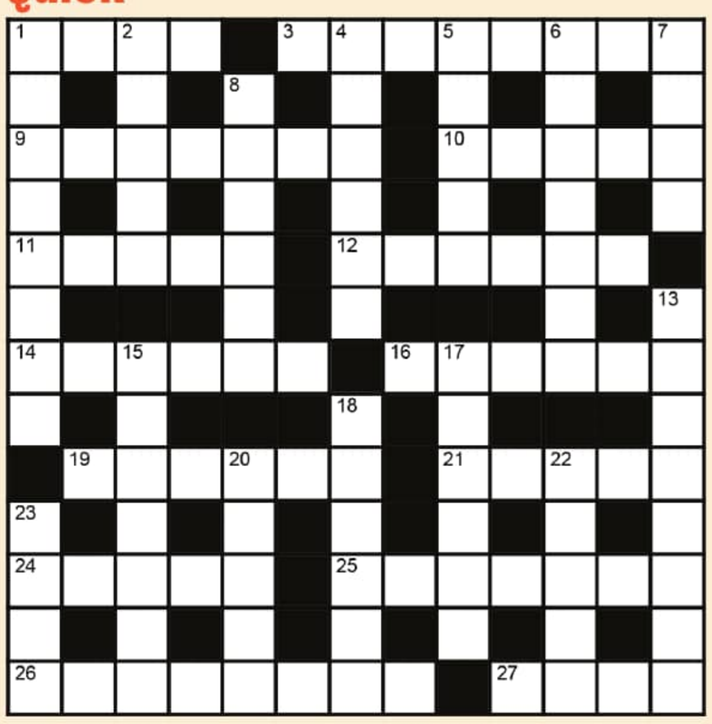
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Elephant's tooth (4)
3 Whitens, fades or etiolates (8)
9 Karnataka's first Chief Minister (1,1,5)
10 Of ___ disposition : cheerful? (5)
11 Persian monarch, ___ the Great (5)
12 Hurries (6)
14 Cutting tool of a kind (3-3)
16 Substitute or aid; alternate (6)
19 Maturing or growing old (6)
21 Severe test (5)
24 Combustible materials (5)
25 Exercise in vanity (3,4)
26 Temporarily puts a stop to (8)
27 Indolently (4)

DOWN

1 Be cautious (4,4)
2 More certain (5)
4 Beds, strata (6)
5 Church sections (5)
6 Nag (7)
7 River of Hades (4)
8 German town-"as seed" anagram ? (6)
13 Disease producing fits (8)
15 Young ones in the sty? (7)
17 Represent legally (3,3)
18 Gave consent (6)
20 Edition of a magazine (5)
22 Owing money? (2,3)
23 Alien craft (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: H EQUALS G

MYMLZEADIH DW HMIMLBEMR EALNTHA ZNTL NKI KDGG VNKML.

Linemaro

I came out for an easy run, but you made my heart do speed work

Mindchow

The course of love is not smooth, but you have choice whom you struggle with

Joke of the day

I met this cowboy with a brown paper hat, paper waistcoat and paper trousers... he was wanted for rustling.

Loop

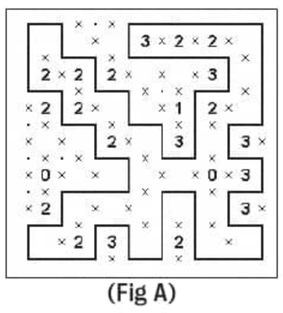
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

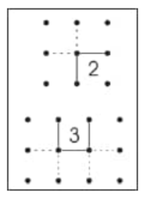
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

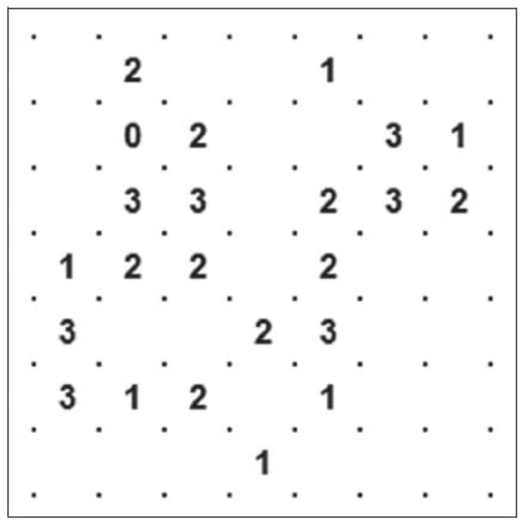
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



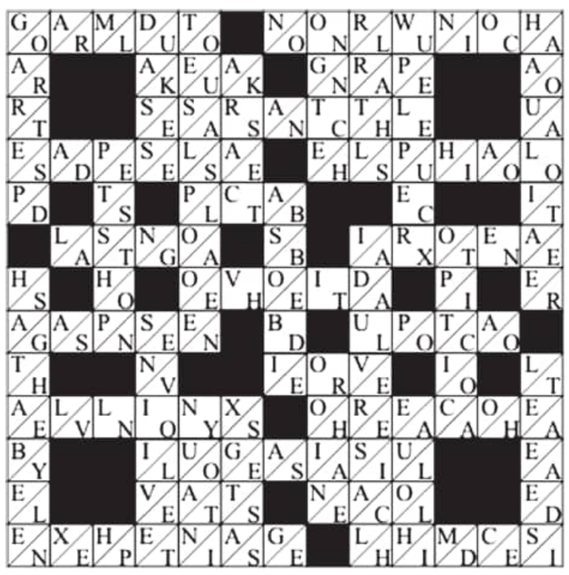
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5
6		V		
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

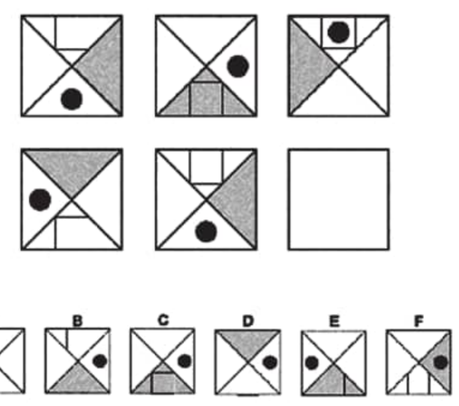
1 Romps; 6 Evert; 7 La Lau; 8 Lohan; 9 De Pun

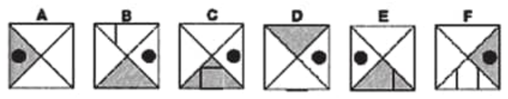
DOWN

1 Rah up; 2 Pearl; 3 Love U; 4 Lemon; 5 St Dan

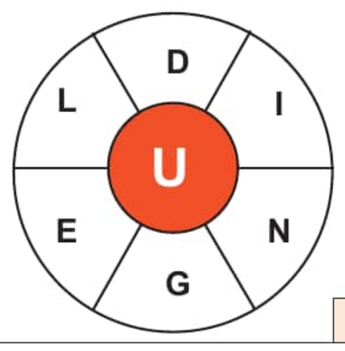
Mensapuzzle

Which letter replaces the blank and completes the sequence?





Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

12 Average; 14 Good; 16 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

		2	4		6	1		
6								9
	3	1		7		8	6	
	9		7	2	8		3	
	7		5	6	9		2	
	8	3		4		6	1	
7								8
		6	8		3	7		

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 2

3 5 9 9

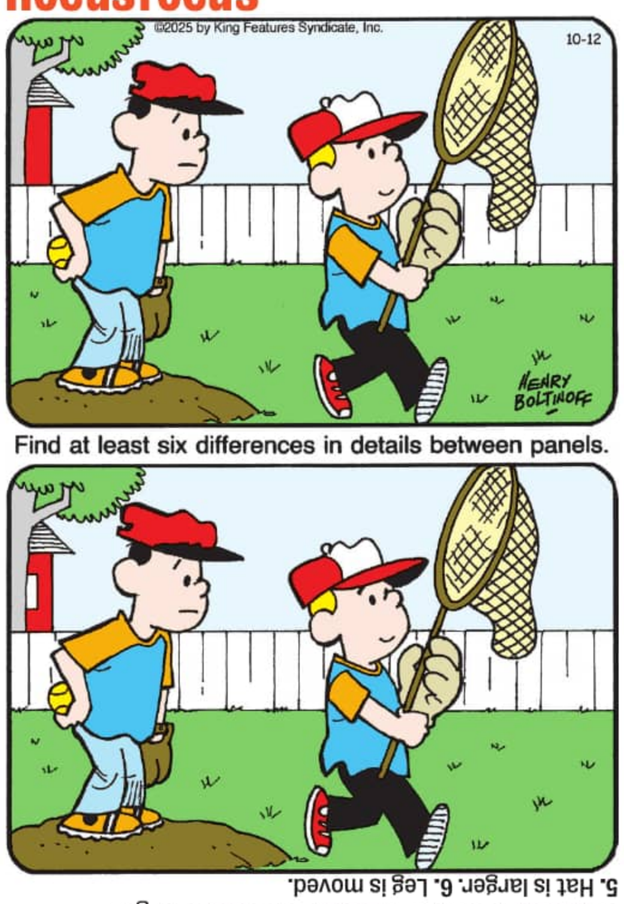
Medium = 18

5 6 7 8

Hard = 21

2 3 8 3

Hocusfocus



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

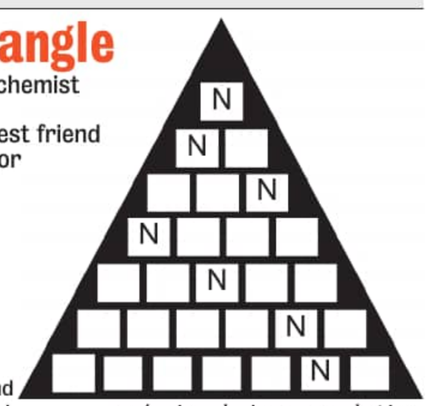
Differences: 1. Sleeve is shorter. 2. Net is smaller. 3. Window is added. 4. Pitcher's mound is larger. 5. Hat is larger. 6. Leg is moved.

Riddler

During WWII, there was a bridge connecting Germany and Switzerland, and on the German side, there was a sentry tower with a guard in it. He would come out every three minutes to check on the bridge, and he had orders to turn back anyone who tried to get into Germany, and shoot anyone trying to escape without a pass. There was a woman who desperately needed to get into Switzerland, and she knew she didn't have time to get a pass. It would take her at least six minutes to cross the bridge, but she managed to do it. How?

Alpha triangle

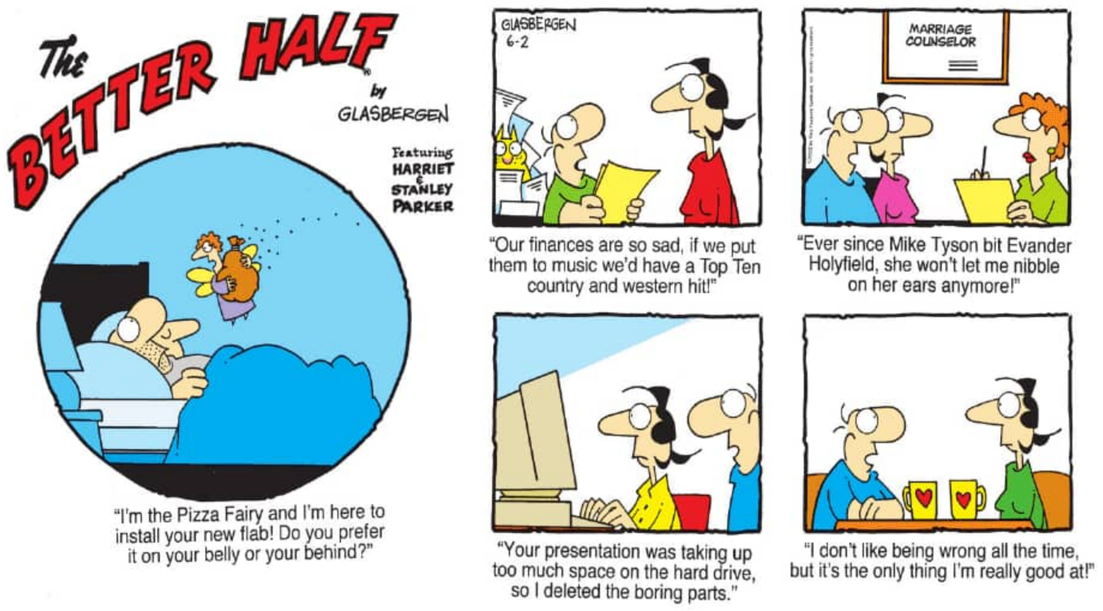
1 Nitrogen for the chemist
2 Nah
3 Harry Potter's best friend
4 Depraved emperor
5 General drift
6 Garden pest
7 Presage



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS


The BETTER HALF
by GLASBERGEN
Featuring HARRIET & STANLEY PARKER
"I'm the Pizza Fairy and I'm here to install your new flab! Do you prefer it on your belly or your behind?"
GLASBERGEN 6-2
"Our finances are so sad, if we put them to music we'd have a Top Ten country and western hit!"
MARRIAGE COUNSELOR
"Ever since Mike Tyson bit Evander Holyfield, she won't let me nibble on her ears anymore!"
"Your presentation was taking up too much space on the hard drive, so I deleted the boring parts."
"I don't like being wrong all the time, but it's the only thing I'm really good at!"

BABY BLUES
BY RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT
OOH! ELEPHANTS!
THEY'RE SO BIG!
AND STRONG!
BUT GENTLE.
POOOOOOT!
AND IN THIS CASE, LACTOSE INTOLERANT.
THANKS, DAVID ATTENBOROUGH.
FLASH GORDON
FLASH, DOCTOR ZARKOV, AND ME -- DALE ARDEN.
IN ONE DAY, WE WENT FROM TOTAL STRANGERS TO THE ONLY HUMANS ON AN ENTIRE PLANET.
WE DIDN'T KNOW THE CUSTOMS, THE POLITICS, OR EVEN WHERE OUR NEXT MEAL WAS COMING FROM.
ALL WE HAD WAS EACH OTHER.
MING II IS DEAD, AND IT'S UP TO ME AND DR. ZARKOV TO FIGURE OUT WHO DID IT...
AURA, PROTECTING HER NEW THRONE?
BARIN, PROTECTING HIS NEW WIFE?
FLASH -- WHO THEY PUT IN JAIL FOR IT?
NO. FLASH DOESN'T LIE. NOT TO US.
BUT... WHAT IF FLASH DOESN'T KNOW HE DID IT?
WHAT IF SOMEONE TOOK OVER HIS MIND?
LIKE AZURA, THE WITCH-QUEEN.
SHE'S DONE IT BEFORE...
BUT WE NEED MORE DATA BEFORE WE ACCUSE ANYBODY. I GO GET PRINCE RONAL'S TAKE...
...WHILE HIS WIFE, QUEEN FRIA, STONEWALLS A COUPLE SKY CITY AMBASSADORS BELOW.
ON MY WAY OUT, I CATCH PRINCE VULTAN ARGUING WITH A HOODED MAN. I CAN'T HEAR THEM -- EXCEPT WHEN VULTAN YELLS:
YOU CAN'T JUST KILL WHOEVER YOU LIKE!
THAT'S GENERAL TAHL.
DAN SCHKADE 2-11-24
AZURA'S RIGHT-HAND MAN...
NEXT: I GOT A BONE TO PICK

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

Today's Full Moon illuminates your professional path, signalling a year where career milestones feel deeply personal. Love requires vulnerability during autumn travels, while your domestic life benefits from newfound structural stability. Financial discipline early on allows for luxury later. Trust your intuition when navigating complex family dynamics; a balanced approach ensures that your ambitious goals remain within your reach.

Aries Mar 21–Apr 20

Aries: Embrace a surge of productivity this month. Tackle long-overdue tasks at work or home with vigor. Use today's energy to finalize leftover projects and clear your space for new, exciting.

Taurus Apr 21–May 20

Adventure awaits as you step into fresh surroundings today. Whether travelling, moving house, or changing offices, movement is your lucky charm. Trust that these changes will lead to very favourable.

Gemini May 21–Jun 21

Prioritise your well-being by avoiding unnecessary risks. When tasks pile up, stay calm and create a structured plan. A little organization will transform your stress into a highly productive, successful.

Cancer Jun 22–July 23

Lingering issues, especially personal conflicts, find beautiful resolutions today. Trust the universe to settle what felt uncertain. Keep your faith strong, as solutions are flowing naturally toward you right now.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

While career demands may feel intense, view this workload as a badge of responsibility. New doors are opening for you. Stay alert, especially in business, for a lucky opportunity knocking.

Virgo Aug 24–Sep 23

Financial abundance shines on you today, making it perfect for future investments. While it is wise to save for rainy days, do not hesitate to treat yourself to something truly.

Libra Sep 24–Oct 22

Remember your incredible inner strength when facing life's uncertainties. You have the power to overcome any obstacle. Lean on supportive loved ones today, and you will emerge stronger than ever.

Scorpio Oct 23–Nov 22

A proactive energy drives you toward efficiency today. Focus on completing your current major projects before starting anything new. Finishing what you began ensures your path remains clear and very.

Sagittarius Nov 23–Dec 22

Start this month by surrounding yourself with love and family. Even if work feels hectic, prioritising your closest relationships brings joy. Positive vibes from your inner circle will fuel your energy.

Capricorn Dec 23–Jan 20

Financial luck is on your side, potentially bringing raises or lucrative investment opportunities. Pay close attention to these prospects. Use your resources wisely to ensure long-term growth and personal prosperity.

Aquarius Jan 21–Feb 19

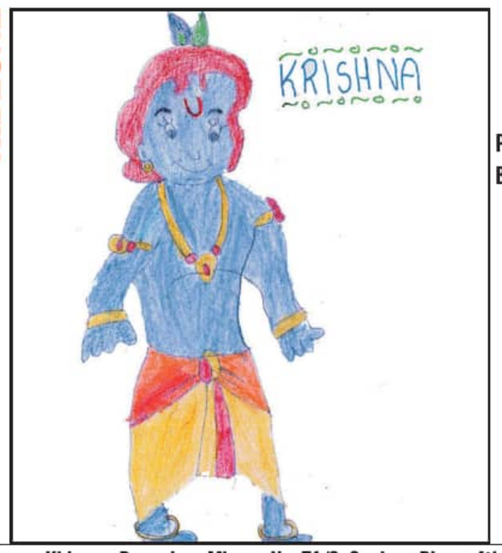
Your sharp intelligence shines brightly at work, helping you excel among your peers. Stay grounded and let your achievements speak for themselves. Success comes naturally when you lead with quiet.

Pisces Feb 20–Mar 20

Your finances are in great shape, so let go of those worries. Focus instead on nurturing your personal relationships. Spending quality time with people who truly care brings immense emotional.

www.sundeepkochar.com

KIDZONE



Priyanka, Bengaluru

Rahul, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

RIDDLER She walked on the bridge towards Switzerland for 3 minutes and just as the guard was about to come out, she turned around walking back to Germany. The guard saw her and asked for her pass but she didn't have one and was sent back (or what the guard thought was back) to Switzerland. In her case it was the very country she wanted to go to.

SOLVE IN 1M
1+5x1+5+1
= 1+5+5 = 11

FAST FIVE

P	R	O	M	S
R	E	V	E	T
A	L	U	L	A
H	A	L	O	N
U	P	E	N	D

STRIKE OUT

G	A	M	U	T		N	O	R	W	I	C	H		
A		K	E	A		N	A	E				A		
	T		E	A	R	A	C	H	E			U		
E	D	E	S	S	A		E	S	P	I	A	L		
D		S		P	T	A		E			I			
	A	T	N	O		B		I	R	O	N	E		
H		O		O	V	O	I	D		P		R		
A	S	P	E	N		D		L	O	T	A			
	T		V		E	R	E		I		L			
A	L	L	O	Y	S		O	R	A	C	H	E		
B		L	U	G	S	A	I	L				A		
	L		V	A	T		N	C	L			D		
E	X	P	E	N	S	E		H	I	D	E	S		

QUICK

T	U	S	K		B	L	E	A	C	H	E	S		
A		U		E		A		P		E		T		
K	C	R	E	D	D	Y		S	U	N	N	Y		
E		E		E		E		E		P		X		
C	Y	R	U	S		R	U	S	H	E	S			
A		S		S			S			C		E		
R	I	P	S	A	W		B	A	C	K	U	P		
E		I		A			A			C		I		
A	G	E	I	N	G		T	R	I	A	L			
U		L		S			R		F		N	E		
F	U	E	L	S		E	G	O	T	R	I	P		
O		T		U		E		R		E		S		
S	U	S	P	E	N	D	S		I	D	L	Y		

MENSA PUZZLE

C

BULL'S EYE

duel, dune, dung, ELUDING, glue, gluied, guide, guild, guile, INDULGE, lieu, lung, lunge, lunged, nude, nudge

QUOTE UNCODE

Everything is generated through your own will power.

SUDOKU

8	5	2	4	9	6	1	7	3
6	4	7	3	8	1	2	5	9
9	3	1	2	7	5	8	6	4
1	9	4	7	2	8	5	3	6
2	6	5	1	3	4	9	8	7
3	7	8	5	6	9	4	2	1
5	8	3	9	4	7	6	1	2
7	1	9	6	5	2	3	4	8
4	2	6	8	1	3	7	9	5

ALPHA TRIANGLE

N, No, Ron, Nero, Tenor, Robert, Portend.

GO FIGURE

Easy
5 - 9 - 3 + 9 = 2
Medium
7 + 8 / 5 x 6 = 18
Hard
2 + 8 - 3 x 3 = 21

LOOP

KAKURO

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 # F&F again
Vin Diesel confirms next 'Fast & Furious' film titled 'Fast Forever'. It is set to release in theatres on March 17, 2028

Catherine O'Hara: March 4, 1954-January 30, 2026

Mom to 90s kids

'Home Alone' to 'Schitt's Creek': Catherine O'Hara's performances always felt real

Legendary actor Catherine O'Hara, who made 90s kids laugh for decades with her epic comic timing and somehow broke their hearts along the way, has died at the age of 71.

O'Hara had that rare kind of screen presence, the kind that didn't need to shout. She could steal a scene with only a look, a pause, or a perfectly timed line. Whether she was playing a frantic mother, a dramatic diva, or an unhinged socialite, she always felt real.

The actress first caught the eye of audiences with Canada's legendary sketch show 'Second City Television' (SCTV) in the late '70s. Alongside comedy greats like John Candy, Eugene Levy, and Rick Moranis, O'Hara helped shape a whole generation's sense of humour. Her characters were weird and fearless. For many around the world, though, she will always be Kevin McCallister's mom. In 'Home Alone,' O'Hara played Kate McCallister, the panicked, determined mother racing across the globe to get back to her son. The film became a holiday ritual, and her performance gave it its emotional heartbeat.

Then came 'Schitt's Creek' in 2015, and with it, Moira Rose. Draped in wigs, dramatic outfits, and an accent nobody could quite place, O'Hara turned Moira into a television icon. The role earned her an Emmy and made her beloved by an entirely new generation.

She also left her mark in cult favourites like 'Beetlejuice,' where she played the dramatic, art-obsessed Delia Deetz, and in 'Best in Show,' where her turn as Cookie Fleck remains one of comedy's great performances.

In later years, she continued to surprise her fans with great performances, from Netflix's 'A Series of Unfortunate Events' to Apple TV+'s 'The Studio.' Even in guest roles, like her appearance on '30 Rock,' she made every O'Hara died on Friday at her home in Los Angeles after a brief illness. **—ANI**

MAN OF MANY PASSIONS

Before joining films, Ahaan tried out several pursuits

Ahaan Panday became well-known after the release of his first film 'Saiyaara', directed by Mohit Suri. In a recent interview, he said that his first passion was writing. As a child, he even wrote a whole book in the third grade with help from his grandmother, who guided him in compiling and editing it. Later, he developed a love for storytelling and acting. Before joining the film world, he also explored different interests like DJing and designing video games.

Talking to Grazia India, Ahaan recalled, "At sixteen, I tried DJing and then music production followed. I had a group called Bass Trap and we released tracks under it. Then came video game design. Later, I started assisting on film sets since that passion for storytelling was always hidden beneath everything else. I observed everything quietly at sets. Post that, I also gave my first film audition and that's where I got a taste of theatre and what performing in front of a proper crowd felt like. It's here I decided to stick to this one thing." He shared that his desire to explore many different things made him realise that acting was the ideal path, as it allowed him to experience it all through various roles. However, by the time he turned 18, rejection had become a part of his journey. "That's when the no's began," he recalled, adding that while some directors showed interest in collaborating with him, producers were often unsure about casting a newcomer.

He understood there were going to be a lot of no's before there would be a yes and that it is a part of the process. **—ETimes**

Tale of an unlucky family evokes emotions

VALAVAARA
3.5 RATING
- **DIRECTOR** Sutan Gowda
- **ACTORS** Vedic Kaushal, Master Shayan, Malathesh HV, Harshita R Gowda, and Abhay S
- **CERTIFICATION** U
- **Duration** 113 minutes

Director Sutan Gowda has managed to convey the tale of a hapless family effectively, with a crisp screenplay. The audience will not find any of the scenes to be a drag. Gowda has proved that a movie can be made with a minimum number of actors and with limited locations and even without putting up huge sets. The USP of Valavaara (meaning discrimination) is that all the actors enter into the skin of their characters. While some of the characters make audiences angry, others evoke empathy.

The picturesque scenery of Sakaleshpur adds value to the movie. Cinematographer Balaraja Gowda has done an excellent job behind the camera. Manikanth Kadri has scored melodious music.

The movie begins with a scene where a man is tied to a tree and beaten by Kundeshi (Master Vedic Kaushal). The scene abruptly ends with Kundeshi waking up from a dream having wet himself. The man tied to the tree in dream was Kundeshi's father (Malathesh HV). In the subsequent scenes, the director justifies why a son had such a dream about his father. Kundeshi is close to his mother (Harshita R Gowda) but does not like his father for discriminating against him. His younger brother Kosudi (Master Shayan) is close to his father. Kundeshi is concerned about pregnant cow Gowri. He volunteers to take the cow for a walk along with Kosudi. You have to watch the movie to know what happened to the cow.

Master Vedic Kaushal is at his best. His dialogue delivery and gestures are appreciable. He walks away with all honours for his sterling performance, especially in a scene where he takes Gowri for a walk and another scene where he pleads with a watchman of a cattle shed after losing money given to him by his mother to pay the penalty and get the cow released. Harshita R Gowda, as a hapless mother torn between her husband and son, is convincing. Abhay S, who plays Yadu Kumara, has proved that an artiste does not require makeup to impress audiences. His dialogue delivery and body language are good.

The movie is worth a watch for all.

—Y Maheswara Reddy

Watchable story of father-son ties

CHOWKIDAR
3.0 RATING
- **DIRECTOR** Chandrasekhar Bandiyappa
- **ACTORS** Pruthvi Ambaar, Dhanya Ramkumar, Saikumar, Shwetha Vinodhini, Sudharani, Dharma, and Muni
- **CERTIFICATION** U/A
- **Duration** 145 minutes

Chandrashekar Bandiyappa's fifth movie as a director focuses on the adverse impact of pampering children too much. The movie also throws some light on the ill-effects of social media, alcohol, and drugs. The director has selected a good script that connects to the current generation and middle-class parents in cities and rural areas.

The movie begins with Prakash Gowda (Saikumar), an employee of a silk cocoon market, announcing that he has become a father. He celebrates his son Siddarth's birthday every month instead of once a year. He manages to get him admission in an engineering college though Siddarth (Pruthvi Ambaar) has barely scraped through PUC. In college, Siddarth falls in love and later (after a breakup with his lover) becomes an alcohol and drug addict. You have to watch the movie to know what happens to Siddarth and whether or not Praksh Gowda succeeds in making his son a responsible person.

The music director has scored lilting music and the song Gelaya picturised in the backdrop of a seashore is especially melodious. Cinematographer Siddu Kanchanahalli has done a good job.

Saikumar, who is celebrating 50 illustrious years of acting in movies, plays a different character in this movie. He is convincing as a possessive and affectionate father who goes to any extent to keep his son happy.

Pruthvi Ambaar was bold to play the role of an irresponsible son who asks his mother to bring cigarettes for him as he is busy playing video games. Dhanya Ramkumar has improved her acting skills. Sudharani, who plays a police inspector, Shwetha Vinodini, who plays the mother, and Dharma, as a villain, have given good support. The comic scene between Dhanya Ramkumar and Gilli Nata falls flat. All in all, the movie is worth a watch.

—Y Maheswara Reddy